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NEW STATESMAN
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How the Conservatives campaigned

DON'T VOTE TILL YOU'VE READ THIS!

Cover illustration: John Minnion

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The thinking woman's ballot paper

THE OBSERVER ×
Choose your words carefully.

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 113 No 2933 12 June 1987

CONTENTS

FEATURES

Barry Delaney: Campaign Diary 4
Election News 5
News: 7
John Rentoul: Eight thousand sparkling reasons not to vote Tory 8
Ralf Dahrendorf: Why we can't afford an underclass 12
David Bouchier: The American Dream self-destructs 16
Denis MacShane: Britain doesn't matter 18
Paul Hirst: Maggie's campaign 20

ARTS

Judith Williamson: Cinema's *hommes fatales* 23
Hugo Williams: Television 24
Jules Lubbock: Designs on London 24
Victoria Radin: Theatre 25
Naseem Khan: Work in progress on festivals 26

BOOKS

Denise Harvey: Poetry and publishing in Greece 26
Michèle Roberts: William Golding 27
Oliver Harris: Carlo Gébler 28
John Levett: Poem 28
Lynne Segal: Our bodies our selves 29
Colin Ward: Building schools 29
William Outhwaite: Philosophy of science 30
Peter Kravitz: Paperbacks 31

BACKCHAT

Andrew Lumsden: Out to lunch 36
Tom Leonard: Pre-election rap 36
Colin Spencer: Starving children 37
Crossword 37
Weekend competition 38
John Minnion: Take Me to Your Leader 39
Chess: George Botterill 39
This England 39

PLUS

Roger Woddis 4
Christian Clark: Vatican 22
Letters 32

NEXT WEEK

The debate on the future of the left starts in the *NS* next week, with analysis and comment on the election result from Peter Kellner, John Rentoul, Patrick Forbes and the politicians themselves

Able to govern

A POIGNANT story illustrates the extent of the Labour Party's recovery in three short electioneering weeks. Channel Four had contracted Mr Michael Cocks, the party's former chief whip and author of a scathing critique of the party after the Greenwich by-election, to front a programme aimed at dissecting the nature of Labour's terminal decay as evinced in the opinion polls. That has now been cancelled due to lack of substance.

Labour has had a triumphal campaign. Not just in the success of its presentation, though that has been extraordinarily efficient and uninhibitedly, ruthlessly telecentric. Much more importantly, the campaign has seen the articulation of half-buried protests against government policies and style, and the real alarm that a third term may wantonly deprive people of collective support on which they depend because they have insufficient individual resources. Labour, much more than the Alliance, has been able to give these protests and fears voice, and has begun to look like a government-in-waiting which could address them.

It is already clear that Neil Kinnock will emerge from this campaign with his own position hugely strengthened — the more because he was widely seen before the election, inside and outside of his party, as a man in danger of losing his grip. The shape of Labour's campaign has played in to his every strength — his inspirational oratory, his exuberance, his impulsively generous nature. Because that gave him a base, he was able to improve in all departments — to the point where his interviewing lost much of its defensiveness and windiness and his famously short fuse sputtered less.

The Alliance, by contrast, has not only failed to replace Labour as the main opposition party — its lofty aim at the campaign's start — but has failed to define its position on the political spectrum. A completely silent, or silenced, Labour left meant that the 101 damnations did not progress beyond the status of a bad pun. Its anti-Toryism was simply much better done by Labour. And though it is perfectly true that its 'Meet the Alliance' evenings were genuine political events in the old style (disjointed, full of hecklers and ranters) the clips of the leaders they supplied to the nightly bulletins were always inferior because they were less well packaged.

Thus it is the Alliance for which the shrouds are presently being sewn in editorial offices and editing suites. The pre-election polls show them down, nationally, on their 1983 advance (though concentration on their key marginals may produce local results which deviate sharply from a national swing). The two leaders may have looked like Tweedledum and Tweedledee when sitting together in TV studios — but apart, their natural left-right differences have at times been starkly obvious. The SDP depended heavily on a sense of momentum, of its time being just about to come, of being a crusade against ancient barriers and intolerances. Shorn of much of that high ground, it has proven to be still a novice in struggling for votes on the low ground with the rest of them.

Many in the Labour Party, not least its leader, will rejoice in the SDP's discomfiture: no one gets odium heaped on his head like the unsuccessful renegade. But it can't, and won't, be left there. The polls show that the Alliance can command some 20 per cent of the electorate's votes: its support has rarely dipped far below that in the past four years. In any other West European country, that level of support would mean that it would be a major party, even one supplying the Prime Minister. Unless its vote wholly collapses on Thursday, that fact will not disappear.

This means that the Labour Party now has both a chance and a responsibility again to become the broad party of reform which many in the Alliance wish to support. That is now clearly a possibility, even a probability. The dominance of Kinnock over the party — over its organisation, over the unions, over a large part of the activists — means that his freedom to manoeuvre after the election will be considerable. The campaign has been run by his people and their allies: the London Labour Party's jamboree in Islington Town Hall on Sunday was a dewy-eyed bonanza with a platform full of celebrities, the (black) Inspirational Choir behind, and the Goldthorpe Colliery band in front owing nothing to the left. Ron Todd, the general secretary of the Transport Workers, was just about visible behind Lenny Henry. There is, of course, no question about who pays the bills: but there is also no question that Kinnock now calls the shots. And there is no question that the party he leads is one of reform and of change.

That is the party which is now bidding for power. It should get it, and it may just do so. In the Tory held marginals where Labour presses strongly, a tactical vote by the Alliance supporters is the *only* decision which, in all conscience, they can make. Conversely, Labour supporters in those marginals where only the Alliance can take the seat from the Conservatives should make the same calculation: that a tactical vote can deprive the Conservatives of a third term which — it is common ground between Labour and Alliance — would make the plight of many millions worse.

Labour is able to form the next government. It should be empowered to do so. □

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CAMPAIGN DIARY

When the Saatchis' first advertisements for the Tory party appeared during the 1979 election campaign, the party's considerable lead in the opinion polls immediately dropped and the more they advertised thereafter the further their ratings fell. Fortunately for the Tories polling day arrived before the slide had reached the point at which they would have lost the election.

At that time Saatchi and Saatchi were a very successful advertising agency, but even their most enthusiastic supporters would have thought it fanciful to suggest that, within eight years, they would go on to become first Britain's, and then the world's biggest agency. But that is what happened; and the ad industry is agreed that the initial impetus for this astonishing success came from the Saatchis' 'election winning' campaign for Mrs Thatcher. The links between the Saatchis' work and Mrs Thatcher's victory in 1983 are, if anything, even more difficult to find. Nevertheless the myths were reinforced and the Saatchi legend grew.

○

None of this is intended to suggest that the advertisements themselves were bad. Far from it. Advertising people, who love to give each other awards, gave the Saatchis plenty for their Tory party work. And even those among them who felt no particular love for Mrs Thatcher or her party felt obliged to acknowledge that the advertisements were among the best produced for any client or product in those two election years. It was indeed the excellence of the ads that helped deflect people's attention from their failure to influence voting intentions. But it was not, in any case, a unique failure. For the simple fact is that all research on the subject tends to the conclusion that advertising has only a marginal, and generally indirect, role in determining the outcome of elections.

○

This is just as well for the Tories, as the Saatchis have, by common consent, failed to deliver the goods this time round. They have produced only one poster that anyone is tipping for an award ('Labour's Policy on Arms' — showing an unarmed soldier with raised arms). And their failures have been highlighted by the entirely unexpected excellence of the Labour Party's efforts.

○

Prior to the start of the present campaign Labour Party ads were either so dull as to be rendered nearly invisible, or they were of the strident, agit-prop, preaching-to-the-converted school, which was even worse. It took the Labour Party two lost elections to realise that the real benefit to be derived from advertising is not to convert floating voters but to wrong-foot your opponents. But now, better late than never, they have learned the lesson and turned it brilliantly to their own account.

When the 'Kinnock' Party Election Broadcast was shown in the first week, even those who admired its style were unsure of the reception such a personality cult approach was likely to receive. Tory Central Office and the Saatchis conduct research into all PEBs as a matter of course and any doubts they may have had were very quickly dispelled. The response was so overwhelmingly positive that the Central Office election team were, according to adland gossip, running around like headless chickens for several days. One Tory PEB that had been completed and approved was peremptorily thrown out, while others (the exact numbers vary according to whom you talk to) were cobbled together in haste and abandoned in their turn.

○

The reason that is most often given for the disarray in the Tory ranks is the absence of Tim Bell, who headed Saatchis' team in the last two elections but has since departed for a rival agency. He has been replaced by a man who, although a deputy chairman of Saatchis, is unknown to fame even within his own industry. His name is Dobbs and he is said to be so boring that Mrs Thatcher will not speak to him. I have not met him so I cannot vouch for this; but however lacklustre he may be it cannot account for the other great failure of the Tory campaign. According to MEAL — an organisation which records and analyses advertising expenditure — going into the last few days of the campaign the Tories had been outspent by the Labour Party in the press. It remains a mystery why the Tories have not used their vastly greater resources to hammer their message home and swamp the opposition. They certainly did so in the past.

○

In the meantime, the poor old Alliance, who have even less money than the Labour Party, have just begun to realise that the apparently sensible policy of spending the lot in winnable constituencies and ignoring the rest may not be such a good idea after all. The latest view is that because they have no presence outside the 50 key marginals, this has been responsible for their poor showing in national polls. This in turn has had the effect of discouraging their potential supporters in the marginals themselves.

It was also believed at the beginning of the campaign that the Alliance's sparse resources would be given added value by the skills of David Abbott, advertising's most successful creative man. But for some reason this has not happened, and Alliance ads are distinguished chiefly by the same lack of passion that Dr Owen and most other people feel has characterised their entire campaign.

○

The Labour Party has not appointed an agency, but has instead a group of sympathisers from the advertising world who are known as the Shadow Communications Group and referred to simply as 'Shadow' by *Campaign* (advertising's trade magazine). There was a demand in last week's edition of *Campaign* for the Labour Party to come clean and admit that their ads were in fact the work of one agency, Boase Massimi Pollitt, which was responsible for the GLC anti-abolition advertising. In fact, BMP does provide the core of Shadow, but volunteers from elsewhere are involved, including at least one from Saatchi and Saatchi. I wonder what Mrs T, with her well known antipathy to moles — real or imagined — would make of it all if she knew?

○

There is one advertising issue thrown up by this election which has no direct connection with the political parties but which may just linger on after 11 June. Last year the IBA gave its approval to a television commercial from British Nuclear Fuels, extolling the virtues of Sellafield. At about the same time it turned down a commercial from Greenpeace which put forward a somewhat different view of the same subject, on the grounds that it was political and therefore forbidden under the terms of the Broadcasting Acts. The BNF commercial was not political, it was said, because it was simply the kind of promotion that any industrial organisation would be expected to engage in. But now BNF have been told by the IBA that they cannot run their commercial during the election campaign because it could be seen as political. Odd isn't it? Whether or not anybody investigates the legal implications of it all will, I suppose, depend upon the outcome of the election.

Barry Delaney

Barry Delaney is a director of the Delaney Fletcher Delaney advertising agency.

ROGER WODDIS

Choice

After the words are done, the pictures faded,
The seducing posters beckoning the robbed to buy
Covered in mud, comes the unavoidable day
When even the silent find they have a voice.
After the last shrill motorcade has receded,
The time of moaning is over. We have a choice.

Eight years: a sentence you would get
For robbing a pet shop or vandalising a vicarage.
Has it been that long? Those of an age
To lose their political virginity may not bother.
Others may choose to place an each-way bet;
Here I shall play to win, and can do no other.

The time and place of my choice is now.
Should I back a horse of a different colour,
Opt for a further reign of glorious squalor,
Or one that leaves the world and hope intact?
They talk of millions; but the wise know how
All depends on the anonymous, single act.

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The last word on Tactical Voting

PEOPLE *are* prepared to vote tactically in Tory-held marginals: both the *Newsnight* and the *Weekend World* marginal polls show a willingness by a substantial proportion of Labour and Alliance voters to switch votes to the other in order to defeat the sitting Conservative. But 11 June alone will show how far this translates into crosses on paper.

TV 87, the organisation which has pushed the tactical vote throughout this campaign, has made only two amendments to the list of 112 key target seats published in the *New Statesman* on 22 May: in both cases, changing a recommendation to vote Alliance to one for Labour. These are *Calder Valley* and *Stockport*: in the first, local Harris polls have shown Labour clearly ahead and in the second, Labour is likely to be ahead — a position which will be clarified by an 8 June poll in the *Manchester Evening News*.

In the eight seats where TV 87 noted that a 'local poll was crucial', the organisation now says that 'the national picture might suggest that Labour is running second in all of these and that it is the party to back unless there is a big shift in the polls before 11 June'. In at least two of these seats — Cambridge and Norwich South — local polls are being taken.

The rise of Labour in the polls means that, in the seats where TV 87 said it could win with 'a good fight', it now indeed has a fighting chance. These include such seats as Barrow in Furness, Chorley, Coventry SW, Dover, Ealing N, Elmet, Eltham, Gravesham, Ilford S, Leicestershire NW and Nottingham S.

The Alliance will have a harder slog in its 'good fight' seats: but Gillingham and Winchester are vulnerable; and Basingstoke, Birmingham Hall Green, Faversham, Lindsey East, Stroud and Westbury could all fall given a modest improvement in their performance.

Finally, TV 87's Scottish equivalent, the Campaign for a Tory Free Scotland, has called *all* the 21 Scots Tory-held seats as vulnerable to the tactical vote. These include two held by cabinet ministers: | Edinburgh Pentlands (Malcolm Rifkind, Scottish Secretary) and Ayr (George Younger, Defence Secretary).

Scotland

Aberdeen South	Labour
Angus East	SNP
Argyll & Bute	SNP
Ayr	Labour
Banff & Buchan	SNP
Cunninghame North	Labour
Dumfries	Alliance
Eastwood	Alliance
Edinburgh Central	Labour
Edinburgh Pentlands	Alliance
Edinburgh South	Labour
Edinburgh West	Alliance
Fife North-East	Alliance
Galloway & Upper Nithsdale	SNP
Kincardine & Deeside	Alliance
Moray	SNP
Perth & Kinross	SNP
Renfrew West & Inverclyde	Labour
Stirling	Labour
Strathkelvin & Bearsden	Labour
Tayside North	SNP

Scotland heads for Doomsday

Edinburgh

ADDRESSING a packed election gathering of the party faithful in Edinburgh after the TV cameras had gone home, Jim Sillars, a prominent member of the Scottish National Party (SNP), told the little-known story of James Wilson of Straven. In 1820, according to the ever-eloquent Mr Sillars, he led a rebellion against the English and was hanged for his efforts. From the gallows, he made a powerful appeal to posterity to recognise his martyrdom in the cause of Scottish liberty. 'He was a man who gave his life for the cause', declaimed Mr Sillars. 'We are entitled to ask the Scottish people to give their votes.' The audience's reaction was ecstatic.

The Scots will vote with the same mixture of instinct, emotion and conditioning as other British electors — with one essential difference. North of the border, the sense of nationhood is also a key factor. Its importance can be exaggerated and its nature romanticised — especially by the SNP and observers from the south — but only a fool could pretend that it does not exist. Hence, as well as England's basic three choices — popular capitalism, democratic socialism or a mixture of both — here there is Scottish nationalism.

A subtle form of nationalism has always been implicit in the differing strategies, policies and ideologies of all the major parties in Scotland. But it is, of course, the SNP that tries the hardest to translate the sentiment into votes. The party's central aim, now as always, is the establishment of an independent Scottish Parliament with full control over Scottish affairs. Sometimes its appeal can sound petulant, introverted and reactionary, thereby alienating all but diehards. Conscious of this risk, SNP leaders have taken every opportunity in this election to present themselves as broad-minded internationalists (hence the much-trumpeted alliance with Plaid Cymru) and their party as a 'moderate left of centre party' with a series of socially responsible policies — some of which, as it happens, are well to the left of Labour's (such as outright opposition to membership of NATO and more ambitious job-creation plans).

But the SNP cannot hope to win a majority of Scotland's 72 seats. That is why its strategists persistently stress the impact that a substantial increase in the nationalist vote would have on the English-based parties (hence the slogan 'Play the Scottish card'). There is no doubt that it is an effective ploy, although it carries the danger of reducing the status of SNP votes to protest votes.

As the election campaign draws to a close there is some evidence that the party's tactics may be bearing fruit. The latest System Three opinion poll puts its support at 17 per cent, compared to 12 per cent in the 1983 election. This means, it says, that it could win up to five rural seats from the Conservatives (Angus East, Argyll and Bute, Banff and Buchan, Galloway and Upper Nithsdale and Moray). It certainly expects to do better than last time, when, as a spokesman frankly admitted, 'it was a disaster of a campaign after a year spent contemplating our navel.'

Labour, too, has run a far better campaign than in 1983. Its latest showing in the polls — 45 per cent compared to 35 per cent at the last election — would, if applied uniformly, mean that it could take nine seats from the Conservatives (Aberdeen South, Ayr, Cunninghame North, Edinburgh Pentlands, Edinburgh Central, Edinburgh South, Renfrew West and Inverclyde, Strathkelvin and Bearsden, and Stirling). Gains of such a magnitude (with Labour winning 50 of Scotland's 72 seats) still seem unlikely partly because the poll in question has historically exaggerated Labour's share of the vote and partly because the two Cabinet ministers threatened by such an onslaught — Scottish Secretary Malcolm Rifkind in Edinburgh Pentlands and Defence Secretary George Younger in Ayr — are likely to attract significant personal votes.

The Alliance in Scotland, as elsewhere, has suffered badly during the campaign. Its most recent rating — 19 per cent compared to 25 per cent in 1983 — could have the ironic effect, especially if it collapses further, of allowing the Conservatives to recapture two seats they lost to the Alliance last time — Roxburgh and Berwickshire, and Ross, Cromarty and Skye. Over most of Scotland, however, the Conservatives are undeniably on the defensive. This is despite the eleventh-hour decision of the newly-formed Scottish Unionist Party, as predicted by the *New Statesman* (22 May), to withdraw its threat to stand in key Conservative marginals in protest at the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

If the pollsters and pundits are right and if there are no major movements of opinion before 11 June (two, it has to be said, large ifs), Scotland could be heading straight towards Doomsday — a Conservative victory in Britain, a Labour one in Scotland.

In the event of a hung Parliament, there are good grounds for hope that agreement could be reached to embark upon the establishment of a

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Scottish Assembly. The barriers to progress might be threefold: the SNP's lack of enthusiasm (an Assembly could effectively castrate its long-term political ambitions), the Alliance's insistence on proportional representation, and Labour's traditional attachment to the first-past-the-post system.

A scanty Conservative majority — say 40 or under — combined with substantial Labour and SNP gains would make Scottish politics fascinating. The Conservatives could be left with ten or less of Scotland's 72 seats and face severe difficulties in scraping together a semi-capable team to run the Scottish Office. The pressure on Labour to develop an effective strategy to force the devolution of power from Westminster would be overwhelming. There would be moves to bring together the Scottish party, its new MPs and the Scottish Trades Union Congress in a co-ordinated campaign, starting with an urgent meeting of Labour's Scottish executive, perhaps as soon as the end of this week.

Of course whether such a campaign, however well devised and executed, could succeed is impossible to predict. The nature of the parliamentary tactics employed, the malleability of the new Conservative Cabinet and the enthusiasm of the Scottish people would all be crucially important. Inaction, in the circumstances, would be inexcusable and fraught with political dangers for the Labour Party. Action, on the other hand, would risk little and could deliver much.

Rob Edwards

On voting unlawfully without intention

UNDER THE present British electoral system it is possible for those not eligible to vote, without having committed any fraud, to get onto the electoral register.

Though I have lived in this country for 10 years, being of Dutch nationality, I am not allowed to vote in any elections, local or national. When I have enquired, I have always been told that non-British and non-Irish EEC citizens have never been, and still are not, allowed to vote.

What a surprise, then, to find that I, together with another EEC friend in the same household, was sent a polling card to vote in the local elections 1987. Assuming that the ruling about voting by EEC citizens had changed, I voted. Yet when my EEC citizen friend received a polling card for the 11 June 1987 national elections, and I did not, I rang the local council to find out whether I was to receive one and whether it was really true that EEC citizens were indeed allowed to vote; the reply was that they were not. Why, then, I asked, was I allowed to vote in the local elections and my EEC friend in the national elections? The reply was that there are too many 'foreign sounding names' on the electoral roll to check up on this. But interestingly enough, I was also told 'not to worry' as 'not all polling cards have been sent out yet'.

The irregularities here are confusing, and the lack of dedication to accuracy is extremely worrying. Ours is not the only case. On cursory investigation I have found at least one further EEC citizen who, years ago, received a polling card and politely sent it back to her local council saying that she was not eligible to vote because she was not a British, Irish or Commonwealth citizen. She claimed to have also clearly indicated on her forms her nationality. If I know of three, how many more may there be?

Gustaaf Houtman

Maggie out and about

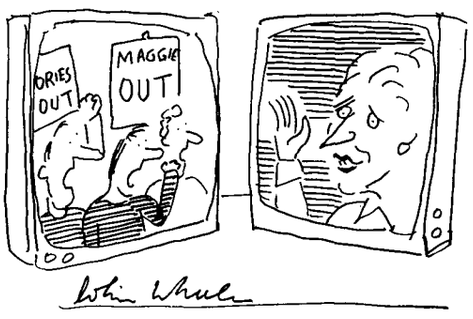
'THERE WON'T be a lot of, so-to-speak, people contact,' said Conservative Party spokesman Roger Boaden MBE, briefing journalists on what not to expect on the first day of Margaret Thatcher's campaign tour. He was, so to speak, entirely right.

As Mrs T has toured acres of high-tech office and penthouse developments, farm markets and supermarkets, security men, Party officials, photographers, reporters and television crews supplied instant crowd scenes. It was not exactly rent-a-crowd. Our employers paid £3,000 a person for us to join the bandwagon. And we fulfilled three main functions: film extras, hungry disseminators of set piece how-do-you-dos, and, quoting one of the Special Branch minders, 'the first line of defence', a human cocoon around the PM.

Security fears are justified. But this tightest operation in British election campaign history was also a ready-made excuse for Mrs T to meet no one but hand-picked Party disciples — often bussed in at short notice to give us photo-opportunities and something to write home about. Sustained interest in these stage-managed occasions was roughly equal to the battery life of our rather smart portable telephones. Luckily the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Sun* carried spares.

In the North West last week, while academically urging a select gathering of local Tories to vote Tory, Mrs T threw in: 'And if you happen also to say, "we love you Maggie", that will do for me.' If there were people who don't exactly love her a TV-viewing electorate didn't, on the whole, see them with her. When she dropped in on a Conservative Party Club in Hazel Grove, Manchester, 30 young locals, 50 yards away, started chanting 'Maggie Out'. The secrecy surrounding her movements ruled out any chance of an organised demo. So it was not through consideration of security that they were herded away, a constable apiece, out of both earshot and camera view.

And it was not for security reasons that managers in a textile factory instructed women workers to take off their Labour Party rosettes before the press arrived. The spruced-up workers patiently waited to be pictured with a famous face and were very excited when someone claimed to have spotted John Suchet of ITN — but it turned out to be a case of mistaken identity. After a brisk handshake from Denis — his wife refers to him by his initial — one lady complained: 'I'd rather have met Terry Wogan.'



At a biscuit factory it was a different story. Employees were happy to be getting overtime pay for awaiting her arrival. Mrs T too showed genuine interest — perhaps a legacy of her time as an industrial chemist for Joe Lyons, where she perfected a technique of pumping warm air into fake cream without causing it to collapse.

John Merritt

John Merritt covered Mrs Thatcher's campaign for the Daily Mirror.

In the balance

A HUNG PARLIAMENT is now more likely than at any other stage of the election campaign, according to the odds quoted by the bookmakers this Monday. Last week William Hill were still quoting 3-1 against no party winning an overall majority (a 1 in 4 chance of a hung parliament); this week they and Coral quote 2-1 (a 1 in 3 chance), while Ladbroke think it even more likely, at 7-4.

Labour has gained 14 seats in our Seats Index based on the number of seats City bookies IG Index and City Index expect the parties to win. The course of their predictions over the campaign looks like this.

NS Seats Index

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	NOW
Con	358	369	354	367	**356**
Lab	219	213	234	229	**243**
Lib/SDP	56	49	44	37	**33**

The Tories currently have 393 seats, and a majority of 136. They must lose 68 seats to have to do a deal with the Ulster Unionists, and another 7 or 8 to produce a fully hung parliament.

The chances of Labour being the largest party in a hung parliament are still fairly remote. Our Tick Tack Index, based on averaging four bookies' odds, suggests that the Tories have an 80 per cent chance of winning most seats on Thursday, down from 84 at the start of the campaign. Labour has a 20 per cent chance, and the Alliance has been squeezed out, to 300-1 at City Index. Labour's chances of winning an overall majority are remoter still, at 10-1 against. But Neil Kinnock doesn't need a majority to get into Downing Street. He doesn't even need to win more seats than the Tories.

John Rentoul

Peter Kellner will be back next week.

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No spitting

Rome

ELECTION TIME in Italy too. On 14 June, in one of the highest turnouts in Europe, nine out of ten Italians will exercise their right to vote. There are times when I wonder why they bother: the next government, which will be formed after wranglings which will last at least two months, will be much the same as the present.

Most Italians will vote either for one of the five government parties or for the communist opposition. Those who are truly fed up with everything can always vote for the far right, the MSI (6.8 per cent in 1983) or the Radical Party (2.2 per cent), once a defender of civil rights now nothing more than a vehicle for the inflated ego of its leader, Marco Pannella.

Electorally speaking, there are only two results to watch for: (1) who will do better, Craxi's Socialist Party (PSI) or De Mita's Christian Democrats (DC); and (2) how well will the Italian Communist Party (PCI) do? Real issues, such as education, defence, the economy, etc., are little debated. Personalities, apart from that of the former Prime Minister and socialist leader Bettino Craxi (whose face is on every PSI poster), do not play a leading role. The PCI leader, Alessandro Natta, is an intelligent and erudite 70-year-old, who is esteemed by his rank and file but — it is said — is more or less unknown in the rest of the country. De Mita looks like an unprepossessing insurance salesman and speaks with such a strong southern accent that his enemies claim that he often requires dubbing on television.

Nevertheless, elections are considered exciting. The suspense will last until the results are made known. Forecasting is difficult. Polling agencies are probably no worse than elsewhere but the odds are against them. The problem is that they are dealing with nine parties and not with two or three. More crucially only 50 per cent of those interviewed answer and most of the others simply lie: to sabotage the polls is a national sport.

The informal political system is based on the assumption that there are only five parties fit to govern: the DC (32.9 per cent in 1983), the PSI (11.4 per cent) and the three centrist parties, the Liberals (2.9 per cent), the Republicans (5.1 per cent) and the Social-Democrats (4.1 per cent). Once the leadership of coalition-building was firmly in the hands of the Christian Democrats. They decided who would become Prime Minister, chose their allies, and decided who would run the banking system, the public sector, the large state corporation, the television system.

In the mid-'70s they lost this supremacy. Parliamentary arithmetics made only two coalitions possible: a grand coalition which included the PCI (a kind of 'historic compromise') or a smaller coalition based on an entente between the DC and the PSI. A mild version of the first was tried between 1976 and 1979 with little success. Since 1979 the second type of coalition has ruled Italy and the DC has had to give in more and more to Craxi's demands for a greater share of power.

In the initial stages of the partnership there was a pretence that real political divisions were at stake. Craxi was parading an Italian version of that 'tough-and-tender' mould-breaking anti-socialist socialism which was becoming very popular in Europe. De Mita was trying to stitch together a virginity for his Christian Democratic party, clamping down on corruption and on those party members with mafia links. Not a simple task.

In the present campaign there is little pretence of ideological divisions. The struggle between socialists and Christian Democrats is a struggle for power and little else. Should Craxi advance to 14-15 per cent and should the DC lose a point or two it will be a great victory for Craxi and should help him considerably in the task of reconquering his lost premiership. If the PSI stands still and the DC makes good some of the heavy losses it had suffered in 1983 then the Christian Democrats will be in a good position to try to reassert their primacy.

The Communists, according to most sources, are having a good campaign, although, for reasons which remain unclear, they are not expected to improve on 1983 (29.9 per cent). They have become the rallying point of many well-known personalities who are disaffected with Craxi's socialism. A significant proportion of the PCI's 629 candidates are not even party members but so-called *indipendenti* who, if elected, will form a separate group in Parliament. Among these 'independents' there are socialists like Antonio Giolitti, former EEC commissioner, former minister and . . . former communist (he left after Hungary in 1957); and Gaetano Arfés, for many years a socialist deputy, then a senator, then an MEP, for ten years editor of the PSI daily paper, *L'Avanti.* Now, furious with Craxi for having betrayed the socialist tradition, he has become an 'independent' candidate on the list of the PCI.

Other independent candidates in the PCI list include Laura Balbo, a well-known feminist, Vittorio Foà, for years a critic of the PCI from the left, Cesare Musatti, Italy's leading psycho-analyst, Enzo Tiezzi, a scientist and anti-nuclear power campaigner and, the most surprising candidate of them all, Guido Rossi, one of the leading financial minds in Italy and head of the Stock Exchange regulatory commission. He will certainly be elected and will probably head the PCI team which will be established to prepare anti-trust legislation aimed at containing the expansion of Berlusconi's TV empire.

The purpose of these candidatures is not only to show that the party is open to new ideas and people but also to break out of the ghetto in which the five governing parties have confined it. The PCI seems to have definitively (if this word exists in politics) turned its back on Berlinguer's strategy of the Historic Compromise and seeks a realignment of the left. At present there cannot be a left-wing coalition. Together the PSI and the PCI do not have a majority and a left coalition which included the pro-USA and faintly corrupt Social-Democrats and the much less corrupt but pro-cruise missiles and pro-nuclear Republicans would not be very left and would be too heterogeneous to be effective.

Not that there is the slightest chance of the PCI and the PSI getting together while Craxi is around. The fact of the matter is that the Italian Communists are in a Catch-22. If it wants to gain power the PCI needs the co-operation of the PSI. To get it Craxi must be removed and a new leadership emerge. For this to happen the PSI must lose votes. But if the PCI campaigns against the PSI it will alienate all socialists and make a future alliance even less likely. Thus the communists must behave like the bedouin of the ancient desert proverb: if I spit in the air I sully my moustache, if I spit on the ground I dirty my beard. Better not to spit, at least not at the socialists.

Donald Sassoon

If the caption fits

No 21

Many thanks for the anonymous tip-off drawing our attention to the above photo of Lady Di asking the way to the loo. Captions to reach HMS *Perseverance* by Monday 22 June for publication on 26 June. Bounty of £10 book token awaits.

No 19: winner

'Who says I don't enjoy a good press?' *(Mr F. G. Maguire, Rubery, Birmingham.)* Hon mensh for: Jo Richardson, incredulously: 'And this contraption will fly you direct to the television studio?' *(F. Chatterjee, Harlow).*

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THE POOR

More with us than ever

Some 12 million people constitute the best reason for voting the Conservatives out.* JOHN RENTOUL *reports

EIGHT THOUSAND bottles of champagne were drunk at the Derby last week. Each bottle would absorb one-third of the weekly disposable income of a National Insurance pensioner or Supplementary Benefit claimant. But it's all right not to care, the Conservative election message reads, don't feel guilty about it. Caring for poor people and caring about social injustices has been tried in the past, say Norman Tebbit and Margaret Thatcher, *and it doesn't work*.

This has nothing to do with the truth of what happened in the past; but it catches how a large number of people feel in the present. In the past, all political parties offered the electorate compassion, and the electorate agreed that it was a good thing. Now the Conservatives offer 'escape from national decline', and two-fifths of the electorate still agree with pollsters that compassion is a good thing, but go off to vote in private against the poor, against the inhabitants of a 'nation in decline'.

Compassion, to Tory voters, means in practice *compassion for the feckless, ignorant and deviant* underclass which is holding them back — the enemy within who won't follow the strong leader to the promised land of national greatness. The growth of poverty is thus an increase in wickedness, which reduces rather than enhances the need for compassion.

The facts of poverty over the past eight years are simple; the interpretation and undertaking of them are not.

The facts are that the number of people in Great Britain on or below the Supplementary Benefit level have doubled since 1979. Government statistics — published 18 months late — show a rise from 6.1 million in 1979 to 8.9 million in 1983. Forecasts by the statisticians in the House of Commons library suggest that the total had reached 11.9 million in 1986.*

The government has the raw data for 1985, but hasn't even started to process the information: it says it wants to rethink the classification of what John Major, DHSS minister, calls 'people who live on modest incomes'. The government does not accept that these figures indicate the level of poverty. Margaret Thatcher says that 'people who are living in need are fully and properly cared for'.

John Major adds that the value of Supplementary Benefit has increased by 'around 6 per cent' more than inflation. This is fiddling about at the margins: inflation hits the poor harder than the rest of the population — adult rates of benefit have fallen behind, while child rates have gone up (which is a good thing, but

Rex Features

Plenty of poo here — but where's it gone?

In the City Wine bar

DRUNK, pinstriped, and with a knotted handkerchief perched uneasily on his balding head, the broker attempted to caress the barmaid's left buttock — without success. The City was celebrating the last days of Mrs Thatcher's current administration.

'Fucking Kinnock, it may seem like the dawn of a new era to you, but I can tell you, there'll be a mass exodus if that lot get in', said doublebreasted, Eurobond trader, champagne glass glued to his fist. Around him large quantities of 'poo' (shampoo — champagne to you and me) were pouring down expensive throats.

'Death, death to all this; that's what it'll be.' All slightly exaggerated you may well feel; after all the City always does rather well out of Labour governments, in thrall to the fear that the moneymen may lop 30 per cent off the value of sterling overnight. I reasoned with him — to no avail.

'83 per cent tax, no privatisation, it won't be worth being paid a hundred grand a year.' Behind him languid voices discussed whether Charlotte was really putting it about, or just sleeping with that shit Justin. The balding broker, handkerchief no longer visible, was dancing a crooked jig. 'Don't mind him, he's an Australian.'

Death to all this? A visit to a City wine bar is always a salutary experience for those who still half believe the City rhetoric about performance, hard work, and intellect justifying those enormous salaries. Halcyon Days — that's the name of the antique shop by the Financial Futures exchange. Let's hope they're over.

Patrick Forbes

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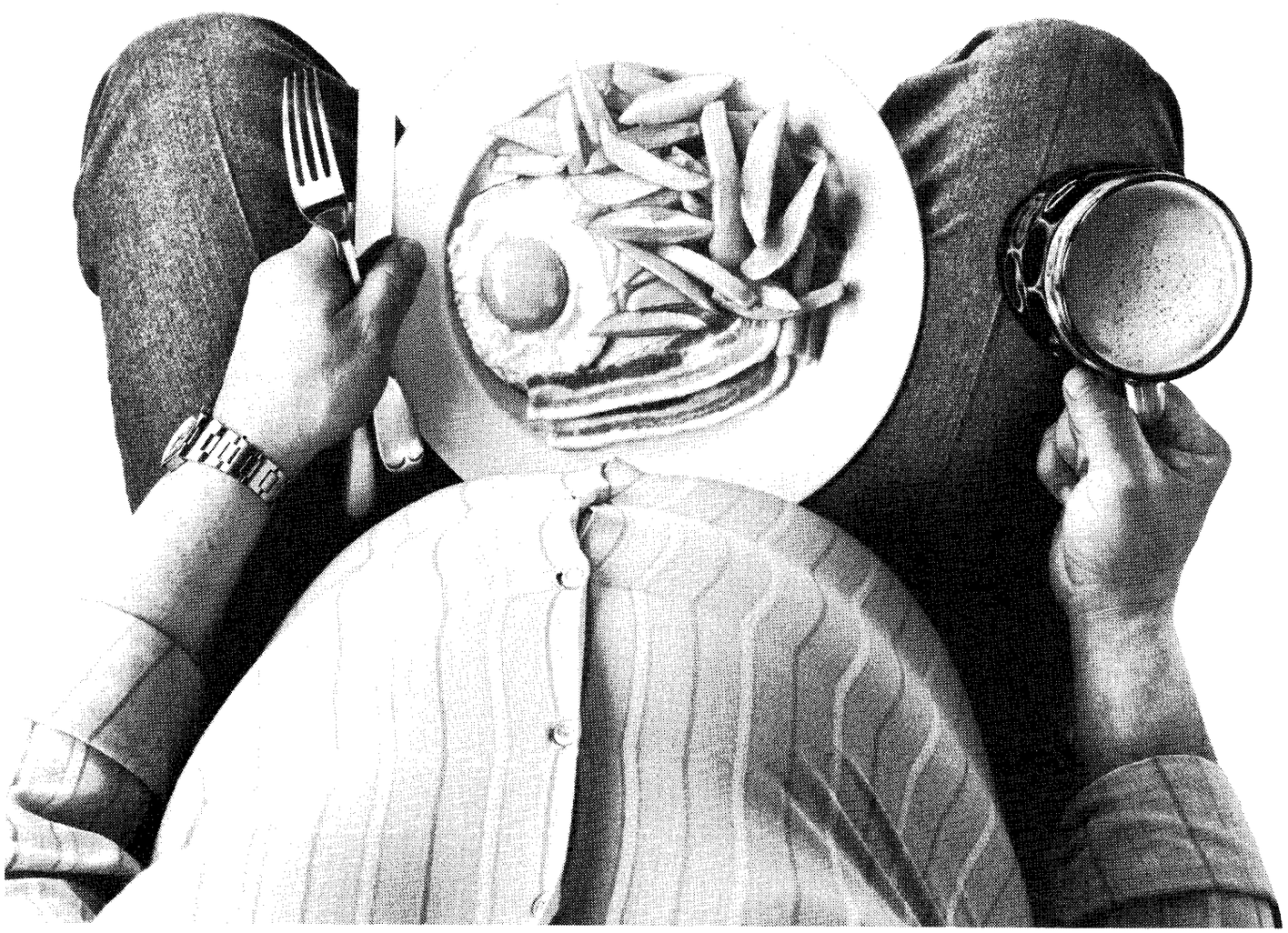

An advertisement issued by ABPI in support of the Look After Your Heart! campaign.

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On the street in the East End

Mervyn, aged 64, unemployed for seven years, waiting for a further 12 months before he can retire. 'Being unemployed makes me more angry than depressed. I was depressed at first, but then I thought, there's thousands like me. After fighting for this country, where's this land fit for heroes?

'If the parties started thinking about people instead of profit, that would help. I don't know which lot I support. Labour are concerned about unemployment, but with people like Scargill I don't know whether they will do anything about it.'

He's not keen on the Tories. 'I wish that bomb hadn't missed.'

Reginald Fletcher, publican, not unemployed. 'I don't feel sorry for the unemployed, not round here. The government should maybe help people to become self-employed. I came down here 15 years ago and started work in an ice-cream van. Anyone can start a business if they have enough cheek. The old jobs have gone forever. I blame the culture of the nation. The Japanese are patriotic but we are divided. That's the cause of it. That's why they have taken over.'

Peter O'Brien, aged 32, unemployed for 2½ years until recently getting a job at the British Museum. 'I don't mind being unemployed. I find it quite relaxing. I'm going to vote SDP. It's true what they say, the other two parties just look after their own. Labour look after the unions. The Tories look after big business. The Alliance takes the best from both and uses it for us all.'

Frank Evanson, aged 67, retired, never out of work. 'I used to be Labour, but the state of the economy is getting better and unemployment will go down. I'll vote Conservative.'

John, aged 23. 'I've been unemployed since I left school and I can't see myself getting a proper job. I supported Labour because they will do more to create decent jobs.'

On being unemployed: 'It means that I've never got any money, I can't go out, and I can't afford to buy much.'

Sarah Payne, aged 20, unemployed. 'I get a bit bored. I've stopped looking for a job now, there don't seem to be many good ones around.'

Labour? 'It's the only one which will help the unemployed. I'm not voting for the Tories; they don't care.' Kinnock? 'He's all right. Talks a lot, doesn't he?'

Gary Remnant, aged 35, self-employed. 'I think they should force people to work. There's lots of jobs want doing. I'm a butcher, labourer, and on the dust (dustman), so I've always got something to fall back on.'

Political allegiance? 'Conservative, though I was always a Labour man. I don't think a lot of Neil Kinnock, defence has put me off him. You've got to have a defence.'

Gary, aged 31, unemployed for 12 months. 'Kinnock's a good guy, but it's obvious that he's got his coat tails caught in the system. Unemployment hasn't changed my outlook so much as my lifestyle. That's been completely changed. I can't afford the little luxuries like marmalade.'

John Ray

offset by the disproportionate increase in the number of children in families dependent on Supplementary Benefit).

Not bread alone

So how do you define poverty? The poverty lobby doesn't help its case by reeling off numbers based variously on the 'official poverty line', 140 per cent of Supplementary Benefit or the European Commission's 'decency threshold'. We need to know what poverty means.

The government would probably agree with Sir Keith Joseph's definition: 'A family is poor if it cannot afford to eat'. But most people would not.

If you can't get everyone to agree on what poverty is, what you can do is find a level below which a majority of people agree that their fellow citizens should not be allowed to fall. This 'democratic' definition of poverty was devised by the LWT programme *Breadline Britain* in 1983, which commissioned a MORI opinion poll to find out the things that 'all adults in Britain today should be able to afford and which they should not have to do without'. This produced a list of 26 items, ranging from heating (97 per cent thought it was a necessity) to a television (51 per cent), but not a telephone or 'an outing for children once a week'.

The *Breadline Britain* survey showed that almost all people on Supplementary Benefit or similar incomes live 'in poverty' as defined in this way, and that up to another three million people just above this level are also 'poor'. The survey found that 4.5 million people couldn't afford a warm waterproof coat, that 13 million couldn't afford to go away from home for a holiday . . . but most striking were not the statistics of deprivation, it was the awful sadness of the interviews, which conveyed the quality of loneliness and social exclusion felt by the poor. Mavis, blind and partially deaf:

> What do I do most of the time? Try and clean the flat. Put the radio on and get fed up with it, turn it off. Put the talking book on, get fed up with it, turn it off. Put my coat on, go out for a walk. Can't do that if it's cold. Sit here and wish that somebody would ring me up. And that's about all I do. You wish you had more money so that you could get out and perhaps take yourself for a meal or something like that.**

Levelling up

The near tripling of unemployment is the single most important cause of greater poverty since 1979. Despite Employment Minister Lord Young's view expressed last week that 'a man's livelihood is a very sacred thing', this has largely been his government's fault (he was talking about union closed shops, but his point stands, however sexist). The poor now include a far greater proportion of adults of working age with children. The opposite side of the coin is that the number of old people is decreasing, as each generation that retires includes more people with pension from their employers on top of the state pension.

But the other 'cause' of greater poverty is the huge enrichment of the few at the very top of the scale, promoted with all her moralistic humbug by the second wife of a millionaire. The *Breadline Britain* definition of poverty is a relative one, and, as average earnings rise while people on social security or low pay merely keep up with inflation, the majority will add things to the list of 'necessities', such as a telephone — in the car.

So the figures for John Major's 'people on modest incomes' are not the whole story. Another set of figures, derived from the same official source (the Family Expenditure Survey) by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, shows the distribution of income over the whole population. Adjusting for the different circumstances of single adults, couples and families with children, the best-off 10 per cent of the population now have eight times as much disposable income (after tax and National Insurance) as the poorest 10 per cent. This ratio has risen from six-and-a-half times in 1979.

That's a very dramatic increase: the poorest 10 per cent have stood still, to be joined on Supplementary Benefit by the next poorest 10 per cent, the downwardly mobile, while the average family in the best-off tenth of the population has had its real purchasing power rise by a fifth.

The arguments about how cushy life is on social security are less relevant than this wider picture. Conservatives allege that, because Supplementary Benefit for a family with two children is equivalent to a weekly wage of £122, it is not 'poverty', because quite a lot of people earn that sort of money. But the IFS figures suggest that the average family with two children in the richest 10 per cent of the population has an *after-tax* income of eight times as much: £900 a week or £47,000 a year (£122 a week is £112 after tax, National Insurance and child benefit).

Greater inequality, of course, is a positive virtue in the Thatcherite project of rescuing a nation in decline by sheer force of will. While large parts of the nation continue to decline, the gap between them and the courageous Conservative and Unionist souls who are heading in the opposite direction is bound to widen. Only by widening the gap can sufficient incentive revive the national spirit. Only by the few setting an example can the many be persuaded to follow.

'No matter how hard a man (sic) works, Labour will insist on levelling him down,' said Margaret Thatcher last week. If that's Labour's slogan, the Tory one should be: 'No matter how hard someone works, the Conservatives will insist on enriching people on other criteria, such as birth, colour, class or how much money they've got already'. How hard do hospital cleaners have to work before they get 'levelled up'? □

**The Rich Get Richer: The growth of inequality in Britain in the 1980s*, John Rentoul, Unwin Paperbacks £4.95.

**Joanna Mack and Stewart Lansley, *Poor Britain* (based on LWT series Breadline Britain), George Allen and Unwin 1985. Also published this week: Alan Walker and Carol Walker (editors), *The Growing Divide: A social audit 1979-1987*, Child Poverty Action Group £4.95.

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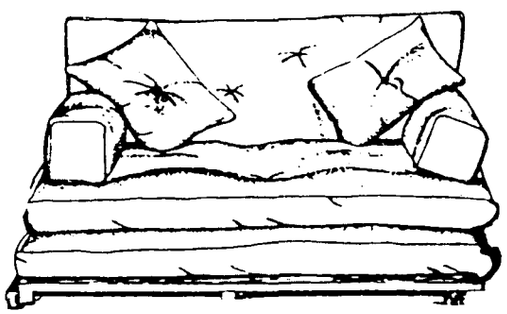

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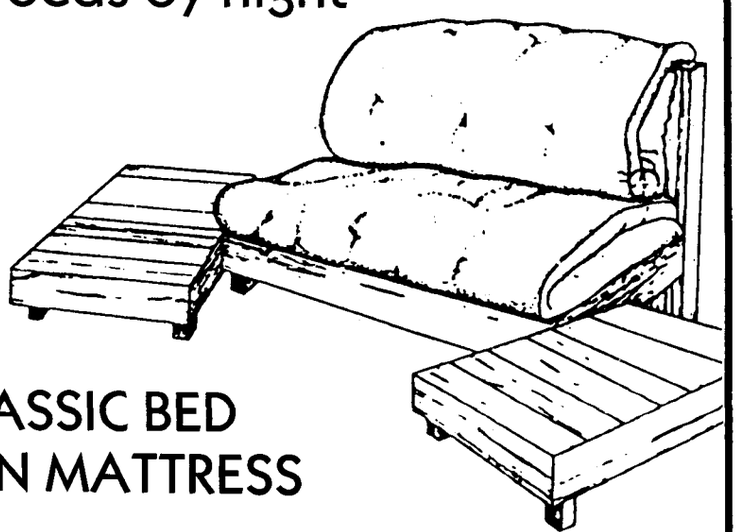

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VICTIMS

The erosion of citizenship & its consequences for us all

Mass unemployment and the deliberate reduction of the lowest level of wages have augmented an underclass which threatens the order and the morality of society. In this essay, whose implications are central to our electoral choice, Professor* RALF DAHRENDORF *exposes the issue

THE UNDERCLASS is a cancer which eats away at the texture of societies and metastasises in ways which can increasingly be felt in all their parts. It is now critically important to define the problem, discuss its dimensions, its consequences and some possible remedies. I will attempt that here.

The other day, at a meeting of a Committee on Social Welfare and the American Future, the chief executive officer of a large American company said: 'I do not know a single manufacturer who is ever going to hire more labour again.' He did not say that he and others will never hire people again; on the contrary, they are always looking out for skilled and professional people of ability and quality. *He was saying that a shrinking labour force of increasing skill will produce more.*

The economists present looked a little uncomfortable. Their models still foresee a growing demand for labour with growing output. But one suspects that these models will have to be adjusted. We may have to get used to the fact that what happened in agriculture some time ago is now happening in manufacture as well: we can produce mountains of goods while reducing the number of producers.

This leaves us with the so-called services. The blanket term covers a multitude of things, from the famous hamburger salesman at a fast-food 'outlet' to the sometimes infamous arbitragers and other servants of casino capitalism. At least the lower part of this service class is in a dilemma. In countries in which wages are notoriously 'sticky' — as they are in much of Europe — services are expensive, indeed often too expensive to be available at all; which means that some cannot find any jobs and remain unemployed. In countries on the other hand where wages are 'flexible' — as they are in the United States — this is a euphemism for saying that they are low, indeed sometimes too low to make a living; which means that a category of 'working poor' comes into being.

This is a part of the background of the emergence of an underclass, though other factors must be added to either unemployment or very low income. One of the characteristics of this new class is that it suffers from a cumulation of social

Cultivating 'underclass culture' with its 'peculiar habits of dress and hairstyle'

Derek Ridgers

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pathologies. Members of the underclass tend to have a low level of educational attainment; many have not finished school; there is much functional and even absolute illiteracy. Incomplete families are the rule rather than the exception. Housing conditions for the underclass are usually miserable; to some extent, this class is an inner-city phenomenon.

However, habitat is not the only characteristic of the underclass. It is also a phenomenon of race, both in the United States and in Britain. This is not a subject which liberals find it easy to talk about. The temptation is too great to jump from observed differences in social condition to assumptions of genetic differences and on to deliberate or subtle discrimination. My own view is that we are faced here with one of those almost intractable problems of deep culture, and that for several generations positive measures of support — what Americans call affirmative action — will be needed to make up for a secular process of deprivation. But the facts are stark and clear. In the United States, 80 per cent of the population living in hard-core poverty areas are black or Hispanic. Moreover, they have certain unusual characteristics. More than 70 per cent of all poor blacks live in single-parent families, as well as 50 per cent of all low-income blacks. The least that must be said is that social exclusion by poverty and unemployment is often coupled with exclusion on ethnic or racial grounds, thereby compounding the disadvantage.

How many people are we talking about? In the United States, probably as many as ten per cent, or over 20 million; in Britain probably no more than five per cent of the population; in other European countries fewer.

They are characterised by a syndrome of deprivation which often leads to a 'ghetto' existence. The syndrome is also a vicious circle. Once people have got into it, they find it hard to break out. They are clinging on precariously to a 'normal' world of jobs and expanding life chances, but settling in to a life cycle of their own. This is sufficiently different from the rest to make them feel that they have no stake in the official society.

No stake in the world

Why is the underclass important? Some say it is not. They believe that it is the price a modern society has to pay for its success. Did not even Marx speak of the residue of the *lumpenproletariat* which represented the 'passive rotting-away of the old society' rather than anything new? The point is important. The underclass is indeed not the source of tomorrow's revolution; it is not a revolutionary force at all. It would be a misreading of history to think that the most deprived will get together and march on Westminster. They will not, partly because of the extent of their deprivation, partly because it is hard to see the one systematic cause of their condition, and partly because in a critical sense they are not needed. Revolutions result where needed groups have to fight for their place.

People who have no stake in the world in which they are living cannot be expected to comply with its norms, and they do not. Crime is one of the modes of life of members of the underclass. There may not be official 'no-go areas' for the police in our cities, but there certainly are such areas for the rest of us. More than that, many annoying but 'petty' crimes against property are not really prosecuted any more. We have accepted the fact — it seems — that there are norms which can be transgressed with impunity.

It is relevant to mention at this point that many members of the underclass are young, as are the majority of perpetrators of crimes against property and crimes of violence. I can but mention the curious contradiction between the increasing incidence of crime among young people and the tendency to treat young people as having but limited responsibility under the law. *The more immediately relevant point is that if a sizeable portion of the young have no stake in a society, then society itself appears to have given up its stake in the future.*

There are other symptoms of underclass behaviour. While this class is not likely to organise itself into a revolutionary movement, it is likely to be involved in riots and other forms of situational mass violence. A case could probably be made that the old working-class game of football has become, in some places, an underclass game, with significant consequences for attendance figures, but above all for the kind of people who go and the incidents which one has to prepare for if one goes. The cattle trains taking 'fans' to and from away games are a shocking testimony to our inability to create a society of citizens, with all rights and responsibilities that go with the status. Football violence is but one form of riot in this connection; the disorders of 1981 are not forgotten and can recur. Let me repeat: they are not the beginning of a new great social movement — to be compared with some of the incidents which accompanied the formation of the labour movement in the nineteenth century — but situational expressions of a frustration which can go on and on and on.

> ***'The existence of an underclass casts doubt on the social contract itself. It means that citizenship has become an exclusive rather than an inclusive status. Some are full citizens, some are not. If some have no stake in society, the society puts itself at risk. It becomes defensive and, in the end, closed'***

Two points must be added to this case. The underclass has a strange attraction for those who in their own social condition do not belong to it. It would seem that we are beginning to see a kind of underclass culture. It includes a lifestyle of laid-back sloppiness, association in changing groups of gangs, congregation around discos or the like, hostility to middle-class society, peculiar habits of dress, of hairstyle, often drugs or at least alcohol — a style in other words which has little in common with the values of the work society around. This lifestyle goes well with being unemployed in inner cities, but it is adopted wholly or in part by many who have jobs and do *not* live in ghettos or slums. At times one feels that it is the only magnetic cultural style in our society, and that it therefore fills a void left by the majority class. Twenty years ago, Richard Hoggart wrote his rich and instructive book on working-class culture, *The Uses of Literacy*; today one wonders whether there should not be an analogous study of the underclass entitled, perhaps, the uses of illiteracy.

The flexible fears

The attraction of underclass culture is occurring at a time in which a growing number of people have an increasingly precarious hold on their more normal existence. In all OECD countries, but notably in Europe, there has been a significant increase in recent years in less secure contracts of labour. Part-time work, limited-term employment and the like have become much more frequent, as has of course the incidence of redundancies and the sense of precariousness of employment for many. One can praise this change as an increase in flexibility which promotes macroeconomic growth. But there can be little doubt that most people do not experience the change as an invitation to move ahead by their own effort; they react, rather, with fear and a growing sense of insecurity.

Again, the American equivalent of European changes in the status of employees has to do with income. Not only has the United States experienced 15 years of declining real incomes overall, but for the first time in memory the average 40-year-old has to expect a decline in income during the next ten working years. For many people in the OECD world, there is today — and has been since the 1970s — a sense of downward movement, or at least of the precariousness of what has been achieved. This is not incompatible with the spectacular success of a few; on the contrary, casino capitalism would seem a fitting concomitant of general decline. This negative propensity may well be one of the reasons why the underclass is so important. It represents, so to speak, the ultimate extrapolation of the fate of many. And indeed, it is growing in significance, if not always in size.

The concept of 'underclass' has been generally accepted in the US. The British condition is somewhat different. One may wonder whether the word *class* is as yet appropriate. But there is a striking social change. A majority of people live in conditions in which they can hope to realise a good part of their aspirations. There are significant differences between them in income and status, but such inequalities do not make them doubt the underlying assumptions of society. Some find the position of this majority almost too cosy, and try to break out by their own effort; these are the much-heralded *yuppies* who think that the many need to be shaken up a bit if economy and society are not to stagnate and decline. And it is true that many have niggling doubts whether things will remain as good as they are.

Such doubts are one of the reasons why they tend to close doors behind them. In the process, they lock out a minority of those who are less fortunate. Those who are in, by and large, stay in, but those who are not, stay outside. This is notably true for people who are not yet a part of the scheme of things, such as the young, or immigrants. It is true also for those who are no longer full members, such as the elderly or those who have suffered mishaps of one kind or another. The instruments of the majority class are astonishingly effective. Perhaps this is not so astonishing if one considers that they include the entire official society, its institutions and organisations. *Certainly, the guardians of the labour market, including trade unions and companies as well as educational institutions, have by the same token become guardians of the fortress of the majority. They often do not reach out, but instead make sure that access is*

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rationed. Political organisations help them take this position. This is how the majority class begins to create an underclass.

You will have noticed that my description of the problem has avoided moral arguments. There is a moral case for not dropping any human being, and it is strong. But there is a social and practical case as well. The existence of an underclass casts doubt on the social contract itself. It means that citizenship has become an exclusive rather than an inclusive status. Some are full citizens, some are not. This in turn means that doubt in the validity of prevailing values is built into the structure of society itself. To repeat the crucial phrase: if some have no stake in the society, the society puts itself at risk. It becomes defensive and, in the end, closed. Extending full citizenship rights to all is therefore the main task of social policy.

When the trickling stops

I want to offer four observations on this task which, I hope, are an adequate summary of the present state of knowledge on the subject, though they are bound to be controversial at least in part. This is notably true for the *first*, seemingly negative observation.

There is no macroeconomic solution to the underclass problem. This is not a technical, let alone a theoretical statement. What it says is that economic growth is fine, and we certainly need it, but there are problems which remain unaffected by growth even if it succeeds beyond our present expectations. The underclass problem is one of them. This social group is impervious to overall increases in gross domestic product or even real income. There is, if not an iron curtain, then a pressure chamber between the underclass and the rest.

This may be an overstatement, especially in view of the emergence of an intermediate area of those who are threatened by an underclass condition; but it is an overstatement of an important general point. In the study of Third World development people have first noticed that the 'trickle-down effect' is a more complicated matter than originally assumed, and is often not there at all. In other words, it does not follow from the emergence of a small class of well-to-do people at the top that sooner or later wider groups will be drawn into an upward spiral of prosperity.

The lesson is, that entitlement issues have to be dealt with in their own right. The availability of goods, services and even incomes does not guarantee that they are available to all. Disenfranchisement poses a separate question and the problem of the underclass is one of disenfranchisement. We need to face it squarely and cannot hide behind macroeconomic growth.

How then do we face it? The *second* observation begins with a negative statement but leads to a positive conclusion. *There is no one single factor which provides a lever for breaking up the underclass cycle of deprivation.* A number of monocausal theories have been tried and have failed, especially if they were applied by way of national or even regional policy. For a while there was a sense that all one had to do was to bring jobs to the underclass, and they would get out of the rut; but it not only turned out to be difficult to find such jobs, or employers who would move to inner cities, it also emerged that the availability of jobs does not automatically motivate people to take them. Then there was the notion that improvements in the housing stock would change people's attitudes; but again, the improvements were hard to bring about, and if they were truly successful they drove the underclass to new habitats rather than eliminating its condition.

The key point is that the underclass phenomenon is a synthetic phenomenon. It is a total condition in which various factors combine to form an almost indissoluble whole. The real issue is how one can introduce leverage for change into this total condition. This explains why all studies show that sometimes particular factors are levers for change. Sometimes, housing schemes do work, or family planning projects, or adult education classes. As one looks at such cases more closely, one often finds that they work *because they were set up and led by a particular person who had the confidence of people and the ability to lead them in new directions.* It almost did not matter whether this was the manager of a housing scheme, or a social worker, or a doctor. I hope that you will not regard it as frivolous if I add that I have been thinking about setting up a company which would be called 'Charisma plc' — that is an agency for individuals who have the personal ability to turn whatever skills they possess into an instrument for changing the underclass conditions. There are quite a few such individuals about, and they clearly need to be encouraged.

The American answer to this challenge is community development. This in turn is not a public policy, but a system of dozens, and by now hundreds of local initiatives. Sometimes, the initial stimulus may come from outside, from a church, a foundation, or even the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) which was set up in 1981 for this very purpose. However, the money is always found locally, and the activities are geared to local conditions. One has seen failures — one always does in initiatives directed to real people in real situations; only public policies always succeed because there are invariably some nice macro-figures to prove their effectiveness — but there are also successes. There are inner cities which have been transformed by community development action, and there are women, children, and even families which have found a way out of the cycle of deprivation.

What happened to work?

Let me come to a *third* observation which qualifies somewhat what I have said so far, and takes us back to wider issues of policy. If one can somehow move people ahead in educational terms — raise their skills and their general level of education — the probability is high that they will find a way to stand on their own feet. In part, this is obviously begging the question. To succeed in getting people into schools and training courses means by implication that one has broken through a barrier of indolence, and the real question of how that breakthrough can be achieved remains unanswered. But for practical purposes, the other side of the finding is more important. People who have acquired skills often find jobs.

One of the much debated changes of American social policy under President Reagan was the attempt to replace welfare by what was called workfare. Instead of being given straight welfare payments, people were required to 'work them off' by doing assigned work. It is not surprising that this system did not work well. It either comes dangerously close to forced labour, or it remains a farce. But President Reagan also decentralised many social policies, and a number of States have developed what some call 'new-style workfare'. This means that welfare payments are combined with an obligation to search for a job, to undergo job training or even general education, or to take part in community work schemes. Most recent ideas go even further and plan to include the bringing up of children as equivalent to work, thereby attacking the dilemma that forcing welfare mothers to work leaves their children unattended. The objective of new-style workfare is still to overcome dependence and make people self-sufficient.

One reason for the existence of an underclass — and of course for long-term unemployment — is that something has happened to work in the OECD societies. There is a sense in which we no longer need all citizens in order to produce the gross domestic product to which we have grown accustomed. The same could probably be achieved with 80 per cent of the present workforce. Such statements are of course misleading: many things could be done which remain undone in our world. One is talking about work at going rates of pay, including non-wage labour cost. But however many qualifications one adds to the basic statement, it remains true that work today is no longer the automatic solution. There is not enough work to go around which would enable people to escape dependency. Work itself is a part of the problem.

Some of the European solutions to the problem of the new poverty start with this apparent fact. One has to do with the redistribution of work. This is a complicated concept. The German experience of the metal workers' strike for shorter hours in 1984 probably shows that the reduction of the working week for those who have jobs has only a limited effect on the creation of new jobs. Job-sharing schemes and the like are viable only in some contexts; they are easier for teachers than for computer technicians or even waitresses. Still, given the continued importance of jobs as at least an entry ticket to life in society, all attempts to redistribute work have to be taken seriously and tried wherever possible.

The paradox that we have high unemployment but many things remain undone, from inner-city restoration to care for the long-term sick, has often been noticed. Some years ago, I made the case for a nation-wide social service in Britain. I still believe that given our present predicament, taxes cannot remain the only way in which citizens discharge their obligation to the community; time has to be added to money. Everyone should give some time to society in exchange for citizenship rights. But there is no reason why this should not begin on a voluntary basis. There are many voluntary organisations already; if one added a string of community development foundations to them, this might help the underclass both by participation and by objective.

One of the most controversial responses to the changing condition of work is the demand for a basic income guarantee for all. Some like to discuss the issue in terms of 'de-coupling' income from work, and thereby avoiding some of the pitfalls of workfare, old- or new-style. They have to answer the findings of the American

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experiments with minimum income guarantees which were that such schemes not only disrupt families, but also reduce the motivation to work and indeed to be independent. There are other questions. Should the basic income guarantee be a guaranteed income which enables people to live at minimum standards of decency, or should it be a guaranteed floor of income which forces them to earn enough to live? I wish we could make experiments, like those undertaken in Denver and Seattle, here in Europe for the debate must be removed from the sphere of ideological exchanges into that of social reality.

A new search for citizenship

Not the least attraction of the notion of basic income guarantees is that it reaffirms the principle of citizenship. This leads me to my *fourth* and final observation. *The existence of an underclass violates the fundamental assumption of modern, free societies which is that everyone without exception is a citizen with certain entitlements common to all.* The fact that this principle is violated in other ways as well is certainly no excuse. Defining entire categories out will in the end rebound on those who believe that it gives them safety and comfort.

As I think about the future of Britain, three groups come to mind which require special attention. This is not to say that they require central government action, but their destiny and that of the country are bound up with each other. All three are minorities, and their significance is very different, but each of them not only tells a part of the story but will write the history of Britain's future.

The first group includes those who operate at the frontier of economic and social development. One thinks of Joseph Schumpeter's 'entrepreneur' but also Max Weber's 'politician' and Daniel Bell's 'scientific-technical estate', in other words all those who move things forward by their creativity and initiative. We do not know much about the conditions under which this group thrives, though we do know when it does not thrive. For example, an excess of planning, however well-intentioned, tends to destroy rather than stimulate initiative; and I am not just talking about obvious cases, like Eastern Europe, but less obvious ones as well. A highly functional approach to government, industry and universities for example is as likely to stifle initiative as to stimulate it. But this is another subject altogether. It is another subject also because while Britain needs leadership with initiative and imagination in all fields, such leadership does not by itself solve other social problems, including that of the underclass.

The second minority which needs special attention is what I have called the 'intermediate area' of those whose social and economic position is in the balance. They are not a part of the secure majority, but they are not — at any rate, not yet — a part of the underclass either. They can go either way. One should not take their destiny lightly. Which way they go will decide the prevailing mood of the country, upbeat or downbeat as it were, looking forward to new opportunities or anxiously clinging to precarious positions. There is little reason to be proud of greater flexibility if this means essentially that the safety net is taken away from the most vulnerable. It might well be worthwhile to devote some thought to the economics and politics of those with part-time or limited-term employment who fear that they have become citizens on parole.

The third important group is the underclass. Whether it grows in size and hardens in separateness, or whether the boundary between it and the rest becomes more penetrable, is critical for the moral hygiene of British society but also for its social and political stability. The question is who will make the underclass his or her cause. Since I believe in the politics of interest, and see nothing wrong with it, I do not find it easy to answer the question. It will probably have to be people who have little to fear directly but are concerned about the erosion of citizenship because of its consequences for all. Fortunately, one could name some outstanding persons who have spoken up for the plight of the dispossessed — church leaders, judges, other public figures — and who have called for action. What we need is not just government action, but a hundred if not a thousand local initiatives. I trust they will be found and supported. □

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Prof. Dahrendorf is taking over as Master of St Antony's College, Oxford in October 1987. He has been living and teaching in the USA.

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The great greed of 1987

DAVID BOUCHIER *says that fear and hopelessness now spur the pursuit of wealth*

New York

THERE IS A money madness in the air which goes beyond the traditional American passion for the almighty buck. *Like the steady drinker who one day slips into alcoholism, America has lost control of its greed.*

Greed is fashionable, and restraint is out of style. Ivan Boesky, before his downfall, was a popular speaker at colleges, where he preached the undiluted gospel of naked avarice. Greed is driven by a fearful sense that there may not be much time. Slow accumulation, long-term strategy and forward planning are relics from an earlier age of innocence. The sense of economic doom which hangs over the country is almost palpable.

The American media spend so much time on the coming Great Crash of 1988/1989/1990 that most of us who live here are anaesthetised to the message. Who needs to peer into the economic abyss when summer is almost here, the dogwoods need spraying and the auto-start lawnmower won't start? My eyes were un-glazed by a semester of give-and-take on the theme of 'Inequality' with a room full of nice, middle-class American university students who were struggling and failing to stay optimistic in the face of it all. At the end of the semester, one phrase stuck in my mind. 'The party's over, professor, there's nothing to look forward to. Your generation ruined it for us.'

What 'we' have ruined is the American Dream of secure affluence. At a recent conference in Boston on 'The American Dream', not a single paper that I heard deviated from the convention that the dream has nothing to do with freedom or democracy, and everything to do with living standards. In the annual opinion poll of entering college students this academic year, 70 per cent gave as their reason for entering college 'to make more money,' and more than a quarter of all students were headed for business studies. Questioned about their essential goals in life, 73 per cent of new students chose 'being very well off financially'. Both these percentages have gone up by a third in the last ten years while the proportion of students who have ambitions to do 'something creative' with their lives has sunk to 10 per cent. On the wall of the men's room in the university library, some young philosopher has summed up the *zeitgeist*: 'Whoever dies with the most toys, wins.'

A basic, existential need

From Britain, it's easy to dismiss these attitudes as sheer philistinism. Even American educators have begun to fret about the many students who are comfortable with computerised spreadsheets but illiterate in everything else. But American culture is money culture, where nothing much else is on offer in the way of a pathway to happiness. Schopenhauer's remark that 'Money is happiness in the abstract' might have been coined for a society in which the urge for money is not just greed, but a basic, existential *need*. What makes it all so poignant in 1987 is that the great money-machine is about to self-destruct.

In Truffaut's film classic, *Les Quatre Cent Coups*, the small protagonist Antoine is reduced to a pitiful state of uncertainty by the piling-up of one unhappiness after another. Each problem individually manageable, all together add up to a crushing weight of uncertainty and fear. Something like this has happened to the ordinary people of America in the 1980s.

As my students tell it, they have more bad news and forboding than they can handle. Not fear of nuclear war (which is almost a romance for some of them, and one which the mass media are beginning to encourage) but fear of a sour, declining, petty future when nothing will be the way it was. These students are the lucky ones, whose college degrees would once have guaranteed a substantial income.

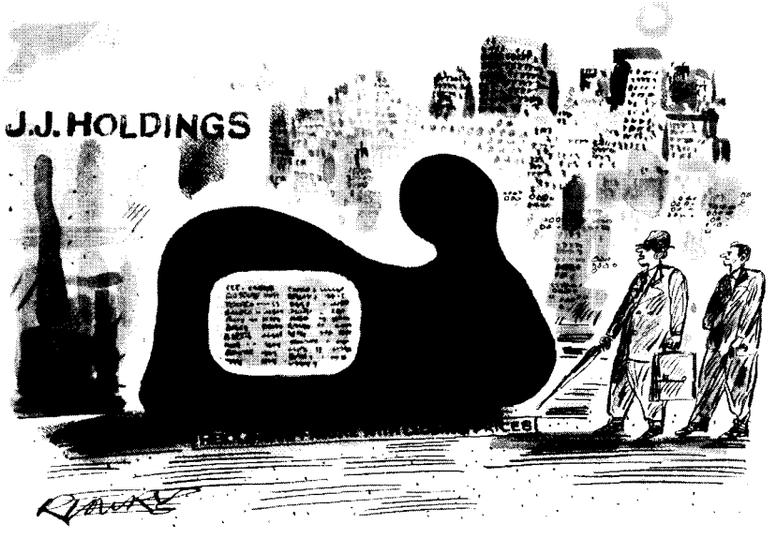
They know that the machine is running on empty, and that the great surplus of personal goods and fortunes built up in the fat years after World War II is being dissipated. The most basic American Dream of a family home, and enough savings to send the kids to college, is now an impossible dream for middle-class youngsters. The period of 'primitive accumulation' is over. In many metropolitan areas, where the jobs are, housing alone now swallows up half the income of a two-job family, double the cost 20 years ago. The students know that they will finish their own college educations with hefty debts for tuition and, with fees rising at twice the rate of inflation, the education of their own kids will cripple them. They know, anyway, that schooling is subject to the law of diminishing returns. They know or guess what it will be like to raise kids in a drug-saturated culture. And they know that, slowly, inexorably, the American middle class is shrinking, and that they will not live as well as their parents did. Every day, students are reminded that non-renewable resources are running out. The oil, the wood and the water, which seemed inexhaustible and cheap, will be scarce and expensive soon. But the technological fix of nuclear energy now seems as threatening as the disease.

My students, most of them 18 or 19 years old, fear for their retirements. Those blue-rinsed matrons of Sun City, Arizona, may be the last of their kind to live out their days sheltered by the great post-war surplus. For most people, it's already a fearful thing to be old in America. It will get worse, and intergenerational conflicts are bound to sharpen when half of all federal expenditures go (as they do now) to the 11 per cent of the population who are over 65, and growing fast in numbers. The students know there will be nobody to support *them*. Only three workers per pensioner in 1990, only two in 2045. Big private pension plans are already collapsing or retrenching on their promised benefits, and the social security system is already bankrupt on paper.

The cathedrals of debt

Nothing on the state of the nation's economy gives these young people any grounds for hope that things will improve in their lifetimes. The raft of debt on which the American economy now floats in truly staggering: $2 trillion (thousand billion) owed by the federal government, $1½ trillion owed by corporations, and $300 billion in irrecoverable Third World debts. Annual interest on the federal debt alone is $140 billion which is 14 per cent of the entire federal budget (and twice the amount spent on Medicare).

In spite of general agreement that budget deficits must be reduced, and the Gramm-Rudman law which mandates a spending limit, Congress and the President seem equally incapable of controlling the urge to spend. Over



'J. J. doesn't know much about art, but he knows what he likes'

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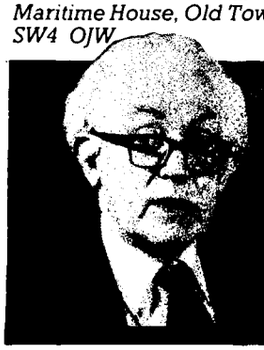

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all, the probable $200 billion budget deficit hovers like a black cloud, a mega-debt that will never be paid off. Reagan's election promise to roll back federal government turned out to be more empty than anyone could have imagined. Since 1980, this monster has continued to grow in accordance with Parkinson's law, and now consumes 41 per cent of the entire gross national product, compared with 26 per cent when Reagan was elected.

As the 100th Congress struggles with Reagan's trillion dollar budget for fiscal 1988, their efforts are doomed at the starting gate by the defence issue. Defence expenditures — a bottomless pit of waste, whether the weapons are used or not — account for 29 per cent of the entire budget. The Hollywood fantasy of Star Wars only adds a final twist to the garotte.

Libertarian economists like Milton Friedman have still not given up predicting a supply-side recovery, spearheaded by the genius of American business. But the country's $170 billion and ever-growing trade deficit is a symptom of business collapse, not a harbinger of new successes. There was nothing underpinning the great bull market of early 1987, no creation of jobs or profits or saleable goods. As the industrial base has shrunk, the American empire has become increasingly a paper empire. With short-term profits the only aim, the daily business news is of speculative real estate deals, asset stripping, hostile takeover, strategic bankruptcy and risk arbitrage. Huge fortunes are made in hours or days, with not a single productive result.

As we approach the end-game of this suicidal obsession, many corporate empires look less like monoliths than cathedrals made out of matchsticks. The banking system, on which business and individuals utterly depend, is deeply insecure. At least 500 banking and savings institutions are now on the edge of collapse, and the FDIC (which insures bank deposits) is this year expected to fall about $16 billion short of what it will need to cover bank failures.

The old hands of Wall Street know what a leaky boat they're riding in. They blame money-mad young brokers and computer systems for allowing the market to escape so totally from reality. But conservative businessmen with long memories are no longer in control. When the personal, government and corporate debts are called in, there are any number of doomsday scenarios. The worst, for Americans, is a kind of socialism; not much better, a crashing deflation or a hyperinflation to rival that of Germany in the 1920s. Capitalism may not be destroyed by its own contradictions. It may simply burn out in an orgy of greed fuelled by fear. Marx could have spent his declining years at the beach.

Small wonder that, on the edge of the precipice, today's students feel the need to insulate themselves against the coming horrors. The future seems unreal to them, and the only salvation they can see is money.

And small wonder that America in 1987 is beset with spying-for-money scandals, teenage suicides, an increasingly escapist media and the whole sleazy circus of apocalyptic evangelists, with mistresses and Mercedes. It all makes sense, of a sort. □

David Bouchier is a British-born sociologist who now teaches and writes in the US.

MEDIA

A distant land

Denis MacShane

THE MOST remarkable aspect of continental press coverage of the election campaign is how little there is of it. Of course, until the very last week, Mrs Thatcher's victory was taken for granted. But, more importantly, Britain is no longer seen as a country which matters in the way that America, Japan, West Germany and even France do.

And, if anything, the coverage has reinforced the image of impoverished, slowly sinking Britain. As the *Neue Zurcher Zeitung* put it: 'Under Mrs Thatcher, the richer have got richer and the poor have got poorer' while *L'Express*, France's main news magazine, endorsed John Rentoul's categorisation of Britain being divided into 'the Haves and the Have Nots and the Have Lots' – the phrase was even quoted in English.

> ***'Britain is no longer seen as a country which matters in the way that America, Japan, West Germany and even France do'***

Der Spiegel's reporter was simply overwhelmed. Following a Tory candidate around Wolverhampton the German wrote: 'She skirts round a nasty-looking hole in the pavement, just manages to avoid skidding on some rotting lettuce leaves lying on the ground, and kicks out of the way a smashed beer bottle.' Picking at random adjectives from *Der Spiegel*'s piece is like selecting words suitable for an article on the last days of a reich. 'Scorched', 'smashed', 'landscape in ruins', 'desperate', 'empty shops', 'wantonly broken', 'boarded-up', 'vandalised', are used to describe what was a mere decade ago a pleasant industrial town in the Midlands.

Labour's campaign around Kinnock has not raised the same kind of excitement among European commentators, save those from Scandinavian countries, as it has in Fleet Street. The one-man campaign is familiar to the socialist parties of Latin Europe. Mitterrand, Gonzalez, Craxi, Papandreou have all fought elections in this style since the 1970s. The Peronisation of politics — the strong leader accompanied by glamorous wife appealing over the heads of a factionalised party via television and carefully stage-managed meetings — is a southern European commonplace. Anyone who has sat in the front row of socialist election meetings in Europe this past decade would have collected enough roses to set up a rival to InterFlora.

The northern European papers, by contrast, are filled with wonderment at the slick packaging. 'American-style campaign' headlined Sweden's *Dagens Nyheter* in admiration of a Kinnock whose 'fighting spirit is close to madness'. The Swedish paper printed two colour pictures of Kinnock striking Kennedyesque poses and all the European press has remarked on the professionalism of Labour's campaign. Per Edgar Kokkvoll, foreign editor of Norway's *Arbeiderbladet*, returned from a week of watching the British campaign to comment; 'Maybe Labour has to go in for such excellent packaging because the policies are a bit thin.'

Unlike British journalists for whom manifestos are a necessary chore, European writers respect words and take them seriously. Consequently, the Tory manifesto was seen as the most 'innovative, concrete and aggressive' of the campaign by *L'Express* while the *Neue Zurcher Zeitung*, perhaps the wordiest of Europe's quality papers, was beside itself with contempt for Labour's puny offering. *Cambio*, the Spanish news magazine, argued that despite Labour's comeback and the continued strong showing of socialist leaders such as Mitterrand, Gonzalez and Craxi, Europe is not shifting leftwards. 'The debate between the right and the left is taking place within the capitalist system. Although the left uses the traditional languages of socialism it is not pretending to put anything in the place of capitalism.'

THERE IS VERY little understanding, let alone support, for Labour's defence policy among continental papers, even those hostile to Thatcherism. One article in *Der Spiegel* was headlined simply 'White Flag' and argued that the defence issue had 'had bad consequences for Labour'. Sweden's *Dagens Nyheter*, in an otherwise very positive report of Kinnock's campaign, criticised his unwillingness to debate defence issues with Tory representatives. *Le Monde* called defence 'Labour's weak point' and also remarked on Kinnock's refusal to debate the issue with Norman Tebbit. Per Edgar Kokkvoll of Norway's *Arbeiderbladet*, which fully endorses Norway's non-nuclear line, thinks that Labour's double zero policy — the decommissioning of British nuclear weapons and the expulsion of American nuclear weapons — was too much to swallow in one go. (Denis Healey used to be *Arbeiderbladet*'s London correspondent so perhaps the Norwegian was only conveying the private thoughts of the Labour veteran.)

The two Britains, Labour's super-slick Kinnockised campaign, and to a lesser extent, defence, are the three topics that have dominated foreign coverage. The Alliance has been forgotten. It is seen as fitting in to neither of the two great left-right camps which still dominate continental Europe, and is therefore doomed to be squeezed out. Per Edgar Kokkvoll went to see Shirley Williams' campaign in Cambridge. He noted a significant difference in the views of the SDP leaders. 'When Shirley Williams or Roy Jenkins spoke of the Labour Party you could hear the lilt of lost love in their voice. But when the words "Labour Party" left Owen's mouth you saw nothing but pure hatred in his eyes.' □

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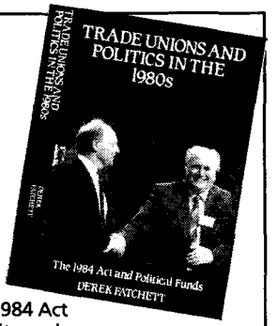

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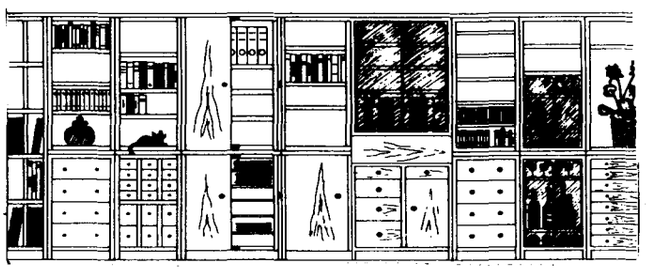

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TORY CAMPAIGN

Will she win by default?

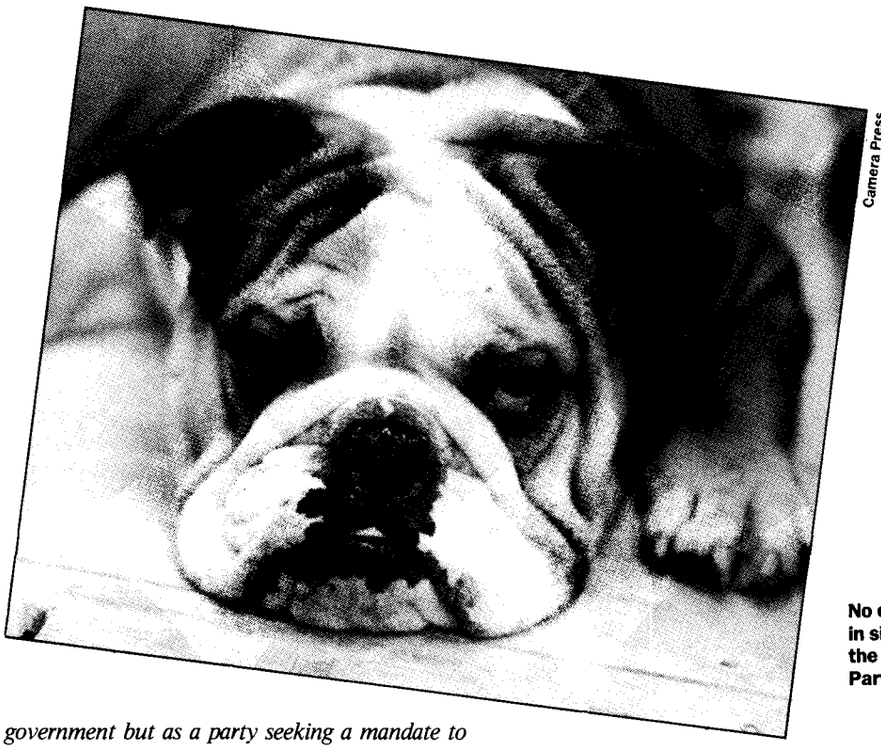
PAUL HIRST *on a campaign with one woman, and no one else*

THE CONSERVATIVES called the general election and yet they seemed unready for it. Their campaign began slowly and badly, like an opposition caught on the hop. Their tone was uncertain and inconsistent, at once complacent and edgy, arrogant and whining.

Yet, remember how carefully and how far in advance the preparations for a June election had been made. A gradually-phased relaxation of government spending and monetary targets over the past year; a credit-fuelled mini-boom in consumer spending, tax cuts in the budget, and at the last moment well-trumpeted concessions that were bound to be popular in the shires like axing NIREX's shallow nuclear dumping proposals and reprieving small village schools. All of this accompanied by months of pre-election electioneering.

In the end Mrs Thatcher was driven into an 11 June poll by a juggernaut of her own creation. She was also probably misled into June by the calculation that Labour was about to be trounced by the SDP/Liberal Alliance. Mrs Thatcher may have moved to stop an Alliance bandwagon transforming the opposition: if so, she made a big mistake.

Mrs Thatcher has suffered a rather frightening encounter with something she and her party are ill-prepared for: democracy. Unlike 1983, the Conservatives have had to fight this election hard, for they face a determined, able and relatively successful Labour campaign. For all their careful planning, for all the money in their campaign chest, for all their highly paid advertising skill (perhaps because of these) the Conservatives approached this election like a plebiscite. It was to be an exercise in legitimation, in which the leader is confirmed in office by popular acclamation. Instead, the Tories have been shaken by an open contest, in which press and media cannot be wholly managed, in which parties get something approaching balance and a fair share of broadcasting time, in which the public actually intrudes, and in which *they are not acting as the government but as a party seeking a mandate to govern.*



Camera Press

No enemies in sight: just the Labour Party Zzzzzz

Joan of Finchley

Elections didn't surprise governing parties so badly in the past. One has to go back to Churchill's shock in 1945 to repeat the full depth of the experience. Mrs Thatcher and her party have got used to government in an authoritarian style, aided greatly by an unchallengeable majority and a servile press. Opinion is something to be managed and manufactured. Opposition is usually a formality in Parliament and often a police matter outside. Even with the cleverest advertising and media advice such a party and its leader could only be shocked by a real general election, an event not wholly under control.

For the Conservatives as presently constituted defeat would be a shattering blow, for they have not merely become a party of government but *a party that can only exist in government*. Being forced to fight, they have begun to struggle desperately and to use every weapon to hand.

The result so far is a campaign almost wholly directed at knocking the Labour Party, its policies, its candidates its record and its fitness to govern. An ill-informed foreigner could well conclude, having listened only to Tory propaganda, that a *Labour* government had called a June election. This is not surprising. Tory government is exactly like Tory electioneering, complacent *and* edgy, arrogant *and* whining. An authoritarian government that thinks of itself as an underdog, a ruling party with the mental set of a permanent opposition is only an apparent paradox.

Mrs Thatcher sees herself as a crusader for the weak battling against giant enemies: the unions, evil leftist local governments, the menace of socialism, the Russian threat . . . Mrs Thatcher seeks to restore the self-reliant British character, to give choices to individuals who have the resources to exploit them. She believes she arrived at the last moment, like Jeanne d'Arc before Orleans, to save England from socialism. She cannot live without enemies, and she cannot accept a world in which there is any chance of a Labour victory. Labour appears in her mind to be the ruling power, and to exorcise the phantom she talks of the death of socialism.

The Conservatives engineered a June election, because in the trap of their style of politics they had to. It is unthinkable they should lose the election, and June is the last time the election can be engineered. A later decision would have left little time to prepare the battlefield and more room for uncontrollable happenstance. But for all the rhetoric of 'The Next Moves Forward', for all Mrs Thatcher's euphoric but ill-advised expression of her desire to rule forever, for all the fears among her Labour opponents of a 'hidden agenda', the Conservatives appear in the light of electoral scrutiny to be a party bereft of drive and without a *real*, let alone *hidden*, agenda. Mrs Thatcher's government has husked the Conservative Party of political and intellectual resources; it has dried up all alternative sources of leadership, energy and ideas. The Party is now a device for projecting Margaret Thatcher. Even the word 'Conservative' has been replaced wherever possible — on hats, on party buses — by 'Maggie'.

The Tories are a party which needs government because anything else would expose the political and ideological vacuum underlying the personal rule of Mrs Thatcher. But at the same time it has been exhausted by her government. All the money

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in the world, all the skills of the Saatchi brothers, all the careerism and place seeking cannot fill the vacuum she has created. In a country where greed, deference and stupidity did not possess a third of the population, nothing could fill it.

No enemies left

Her next administration, if it happens, will not be the decisive and driving one she promises and her opponents fear. The Party, ruined by office, cannot restore and rejuvenate the government for another period of office. The Manifesto is not merely complacent and bland, it has no ideas at all. More privatisations, more anti-union laws are simply repeat doses of the well-known mixture.

Hence the apparently odd combination of complacency and edginess. Mrs Thatcher and her government are self-satisfied about their achievements, but they are running out of targets and enemies. Her governments' achievements have consisted in what might be called the moves of an opposition projected into power; she has cut and closed, sold off and privatised, forbidden by law or denied by inaction. Given their oppositional style of government the Tories have reached the watershed of nearly ten years in office, the point at which they have no one but themselves to blame for anything they dislike in the state of Britain.

Mrs Thatcher even now longs for enemies. She reminds media audiences of her 'victories' over the Argentinians and Arthur Scargill and clearly wishes they were but yesterday. She has entered the election with nothing to sustain her vision of the conquering underdog. No defeated enemies without chained behind her chariot. No looming enemies within against which the people need to be raised to resolute fight. Even Wapping is history.

The Conservative election campaign has so far consisted in trying to manufacture substitute enemies and to convince the electorate that Labour is unfit to govern. But manufacturing enemies has now becomes as difficult a business as manufacturing anything else in Britain. If the unions have any strength left then it is almost Mrs Thatcher's own fault: has she not had ample time to legislate them into virtual oblivion? If local government still presents a problem, then why has she not reformed it more energetically and effectively? If crime is rising, where can the party of law and order so long in power place the blame? If there are three million unemployed, is it enough to say in reply as she does that no government in a free society can guarantee a job to everyone?

The Conservatives' room to create 'real' enemies is limited. Most of the problems might wish to identify in British society now stand as a reflection of their own inaction. The Conservatives have real problems in fighting the election in the field of public policy. They have had too long to make that policy to convince anyone if they claim that urgent reforms are needed.

The Conservative campaign has therefore had to content itself with making Labour the issue and the enemy. Yet here Central Office faces hard work, despite its willingness to use any knocking copy available. The Labour campaign is not merely good; it is a desperate effort of the last trench, the determined effort of a party faced with the threat of oblivion. Neil Kinnock has made an heroic and impassioned effort to appear both a national leader and a man who really cares about the poor, the sick and the homeless. Labour is not, as in 1983, falling apart without serious need of help in the process from its opponents. Labour is working as hard as it can to look like a party of government and the Tories in consequence are driven to behave like an opposition.

The Conservatives' anti-Labour campaign has been forced to give second place to issues like education, health, housing, pensions and unemployment. The Conservatives dare not knock Labour too hard or too consistently on these issues for fear of putting their own record at the centre of the campaign and of surrendering by default to Labour's chosen agenda. The campaign has been fought by the Conservatives primarily on two issues: the Labour Party itself and defence, with the police and 'sound finance' entering as secondary themes. Labour is in thrall to its increasingly ugly and uncontrollable left and to the unions. Labour is the party of gays, lesbians and blacks, moral ruin and cultural corruption. It will let the unions rule Britain again. It will cause ruinous inflation. It will throw away our external defences and wreck our internal ones, subjecting the police to political control. Labour is unfit to be trusted with our liberties. Kinnock and Hattersley are merely the acceptable mask: behind it lurk the likes of Linda Bellos and Sharon Atkin.

The mutual left

Leave aside the astounding inversion that the most authoritarian government in living memory should think of itself as the bulwark of English liberty. Consider instead Labour's vulnerability to attack. Labour has had an image problem because of the actions and statements of sections of the left. Many traditional Labour voters have been frightened by the prominence given to gay rights and anti-racism. These are problems magnified out of all proportion and hunted down with an energy that is nearly demented by the right-wing tabloids. But an election campaign submerges alike the dotty and the half-way dangerous in the local authority left. It puts the Parliamentary Labour Party to the fore. It puts Kinnock, Hattersley and Bryan Gould in charge of the Party machine to a degree that would be difficult to

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achieve at any other time. A general election means massive media coverage and a scrupulous effort by presenters and editors to appear fair and balanced. Labour must inevitably appear more reasonable for the month of the election and it gets the air time to show itself as such. So far it has succeeded very well and public memories are short.

Hence the pathetic sight of Transport Secretary John Moore fronting a Conservative Party election broadcast, cast in the form of an intelligence security briefing. Top of the bill of Labour nasties: Valerie Veness — evidence, her remarkably silly and incautious remarks about the need to arm the workers in the event of a Labour victory should there be extra-parliamentary opposition. But these remarks were made *in 1983* when she was standing as a candidate in Hornsey and Wood Green. And so on, down the list. Bernie Grant — evidence, quote from Tottenham riots; problem, now silent as a mouse. Moore was reduced to peddling David Steel's list of '101 damnations', containing names of dangerous militants like Tam Dalyell and Michael Meacher. David Steel should be ashamed of himself, but Central Office was clearly desperate to find some shred of life to breathe into the 'Labour in thrall of the left' canard.

Labour is no more in serious danger of domination from the left than the Conservatives are entirely made up of the likes of Keith Best and Harvey Proctor. Leftie baiting is all very well for knockabout Conservative electioneering but hardly a genuine Achilles' heel for Labour. Kinnock has convinced part of the left that Labour *must* seek to win and has managed to shut up, exclude or marginalise most of the other part.

Defence *is* another matter. Labour's defence policy looked like electoral suicide when it was adopted and remains a major problem, but things have changed recently to slightly ease voters' concern about Labour and to cause the Tories some considerable embarrassment about Trident. Faced with a severe threat that large-scale nuclear disarmament might break out, the Tories have had to emphasise the British isolationist case for the nuclear deterrent. A superpower deal could remove cruise and Holy Loch will become much less relevant when the US Trident fleet builds up. President Reagan's intervention in British politics was a feeble affair. The Tories have been driven by events to give prominence to Britain's own Trident and, relatively speaking, to minimise Labour's threat to US nuclear bases. Trident makes sense only in the very curious politico-military context of divergence between British and American interests, combined with an active policy of nuclear blackmail by the Soviet Union.

The Conservatives have thus been driven to rely on a primitive and crazy British nationalism to defend Trident: a defence which is all the madder in that Trident is an American system and Britain's possession of it would be sacrificed instantly for America's advantage in any strategic arms limitation breakthrough. If Labour had not been driven at Conference by an equally primitive and crazy anti-Americanism into a policy of closing US nuclear bases in Britain it could now be running rings round the Tories on nuclear defence policy.

As it is, defence may turn out to have been a painful bunion rather than an Achilles' heel for Labour. On conventional defence, Labour holds most of the cards in the policy debate. Given the Tories' public expenditure plans major cuts will have to be made in the re-equipment programmes of the services if Trident and AWACS are to be purchased. These cuts will be in domestic production and principally in shipbuilding and army equipment. George Younger's denials appear unconvincing. Indeed, they ought to do so: given a rational national defence policy no one would wish to retain large numbers of frigates. The UK is best defended by advanced aircraft and nuclear-powered attack submarines, plus whatever troops are necessary to meet NATO commitments at a minimum level.

Labour under Kinnock is proposing to take European conventional defence more seriously than any government since Attlee's Labour government boosted defence spending in response to the Korean War. For a country without pressing enemies, but with manifold economic and social problems, and with the lowest GNP per capita in the advanced industrial world, this seems an odd set of priorities for a dangerously neutralist socialist party. If Labour is in thrall to the left, it must be to one which secretly dreams of tanks and square-bashing.

A vacuum filled by Thatcher

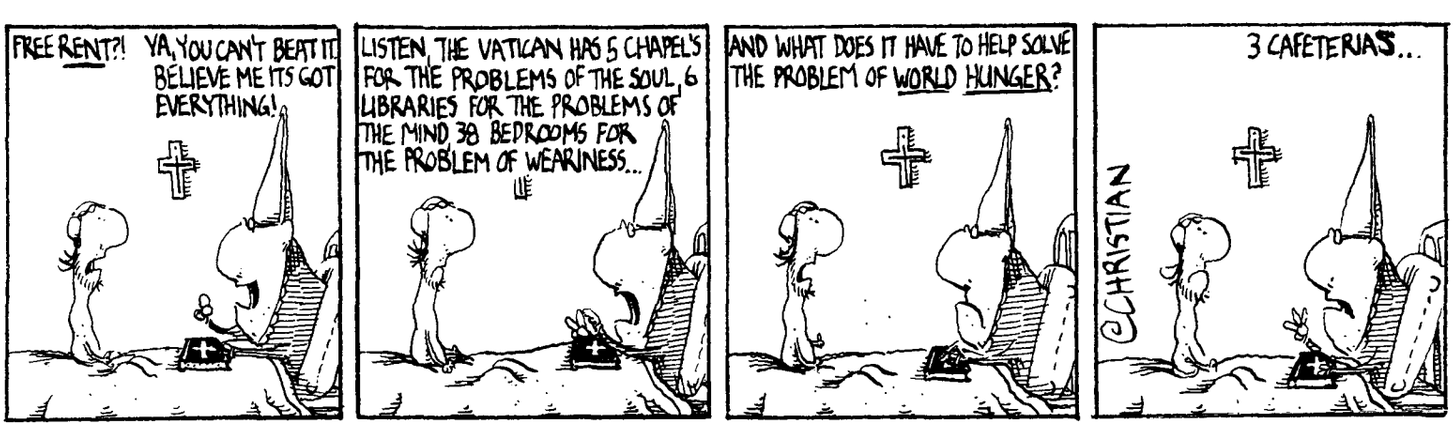
Labour has campaigned well and the Alliance has languished. But if the Conservatives do win on 11 June it will not be the fruits of a brilliant election campaign, it will not even be a ringing endorsement of Mrs Thatcher and her works. In all probability fewer people will vote Conservative than did so in 1983. Mrs Thatcher could well form a majority administration with under 40 per cent of the vote. The election will be less an endorsement of Conservatism than a testimony to a split opposition.

Mrs Thatcher approached the election in the spring with the hope of an outcome in which the Alliance succeeded well enough for her purposes but before it could threaten her, in which Labour was in third place in terms of the number of votes cast. Labour would then fall apart, after which its remnants could be marginalised and destroyed. Labour will not lose the election in the way Mrs Thatcher hoped, even if she can hang on to government. The campaign has restored confidence and courage to the Labour opposition. It has shaken the Alliance, but not yet wrecked it.

If the Conservative majority is a small one Mrs Thatcher will be faced with having to work within a real parliamentary opposition and with having to attend to the opposition within her own ranks. An authoritarian style of government and real shortage of ideas will then pose a danger, particularly if in the euphoria of a third term she is tempted to listen to the barking-mad right. This she could possibly do, given the absence of ideas and debate in the Party. The Conservatives are a party exhausted of ideas but Tory rule could still do great damage. The result of a further turn to the right, to ill-considered, back-of-envelope policies, could be a series of crises and a rapidly escalating succession of splits in the Party, difficult to control if the majority is small, leading perhaps to another general election in much less than four years.

The Conservative election campaign reveals a party that lacks the sureness of touch, the radical populism, the ideological subtlety necessary to sustain that *Marxism Today* mirage, 'Thatcherism'. Thatcherism in fact has become something else: it is the promotion of Mrs Thatcher at the expense of Conservatism. Mrs Thatcher is the Party's main asset, and its main problem. Conservative policy under her rule has become a mixture of opportunism and deep-seated prejudice: a mixture of 'you've never had it so good' for those in work and of primitive and deep-seated traditional Tory fears about public spending and public enterprise. To this Mrs Thatcher has added her own peculiar element, the drama of enemies within and without.

A third term for Mrs Thatcher will be the result of the combination of our electoral system and a split opposition. Mrs Thatcher won the 1979 election by fighting hard a two-party contest with a Labour Party exhausted by the failure to control its own supposed power base, the unions. It was Labour who threw away the 1983 election. This time she will win by default. □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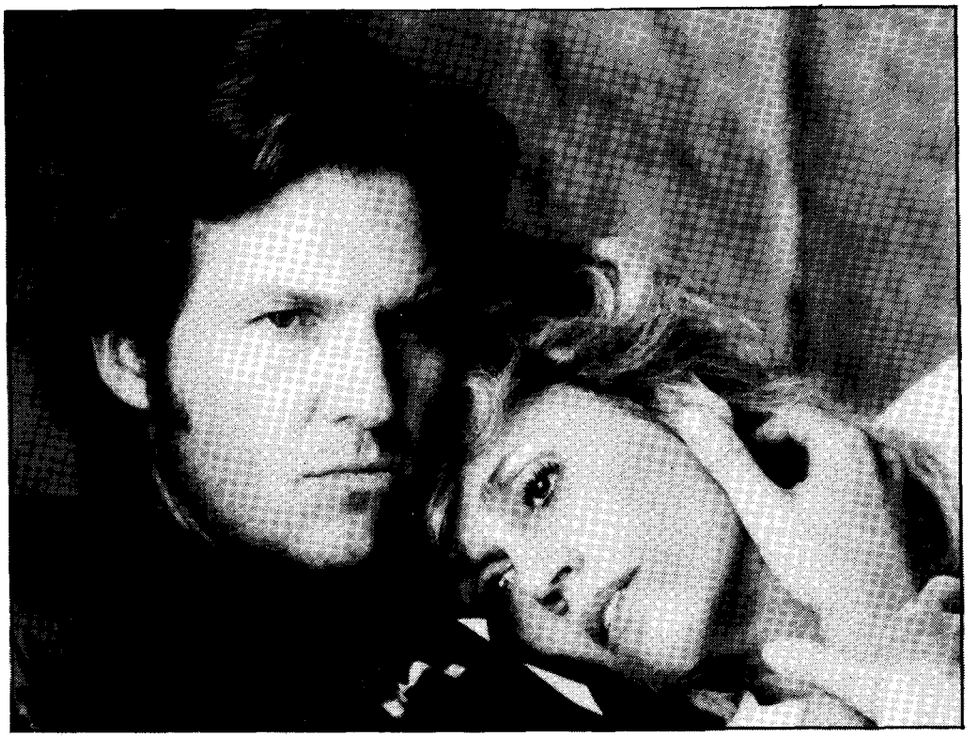
ARTS

CINEMA

The male of the species

Judith Williamson

The Morning After (15)
Odeon Leicester Square



All-American couple Bridges and Fonda suffer from the night before *The Morning After*

NO CULTURAL PRODUCT works in isolation, but films are particularly interdependent in their meanings; partly because our reading of them relies on our knowledge and memory of generic conventions, and partly because the star system creates a complex pattern of links which also depends on our filmic memory and expectations. We remember the names of stars in mainstream films long after we have forgotten their fictional names, and meanings produced in one film will be carried over into another by the very presence of a particular actor or actress around whom certain connotations have accrued.

Sidney Lumet's latest thriller *The Morning After* is an interesting example of this phenomenon. Even its visual style is full of references: Lumet's flat, painterly use of urban surfaces is reminiscent of Edward Hopper, and his tongue-in-cheek use of generic clichés — for example, an overhead shot of a toilet just after a bloody body has been found — plays heavily on our knowledge of other films. The story is relatively simple: a failing, alcoholic actress, Alex Sternbergen (Jane Fonda), wakes up in bed with a dead man unable to remember how she got there — presumably through a sexual encounter. The question to be solved is, initially, whether or not she has murdered him. However, when she meets Turner Kendall (Jeff Bridges), an ex-cop turned repair man, the question shifts to whether he is a trustworthy ally in uncovering the real murderer or whether it is in fact he who has set her up. (If you don't want to know, don't read this to the end.)

Fonda brings a powerful complex of meanings to any film — not least through her trajectory from 1960s sex-doll to liberated woman of the '70s. And the film most strongly evoked in *The Morning After* is *Klute* (1971) where, as Bree Daniels, Fonda is also elaborately framed by someone who has exploited the 'weakness' (in this case, prostitution not drink) which makes *her* 'untrustworthy', and where, interestingly, she is also befriended by an ex-cop — Klute — who, like Turner Kendall, is an old-fashioned moralist from outside the city (there NY, here LA) where the corrupt events take place. Kendall and Klute are slow, silent men given to doing paternal things like tidying up other people's apartments, and Fonda in both films plays a woman at once alone — quasi-independent — and yet needy in a way that is twisted from sexual to child-like. In both cases what she '*really* needs' isn't sex, but looking after.

Of course, Fonda's most recent off-screen image is her work-out trip, and the opening sequence of *The Morning After* makes oblique reference to it in the form of a TV show which is playing as Alex wakes. The programme is about the dead man, a photographer, and asks whether his images of women's bodies doing work-out and pumping iron are pornographic: 'Is he glorifying the new female form or is he the king of sleaze?' We are then treated to the film's only glimpse of *that* body, the famous Fonda thigh; the rest of the film denies us such images, but here it coincides with the moment where her integrity is most in doubt.

But, most importantly, the opening TV show raises questions about her apparent date from the night before. And this kicks off the real drive of the film, which, unlike earlier *films noirs*, hinges on whether or not a desired *man* is to be trusted. Much has been written about the role of the *femme fatale* in movies — that figure of both sexuality and treachery who represents the contradictory desires and fears of the male protagonist. I would contend that there is a relatively new '*homme fatale*' figure in contemporary films (though since both figures function within an ultimately patriarchal framework this is not a simple reversal) and this is precisely where the 'carried over' connotations of Jeff Bridges come into play.

The publicity image for *The Morning After* is a split square with Fonda's face on one side, Bridges' on the other. Fonda's face suggests fear, though also possibly desire. But the most striking thing about Bridges is that the cool, threatening face in the poster resembles not so much the solid, red-necked persona of Turner Kendall as Jack Forrester, the sexy and treacherous hero of *Jagged Edge*.

And it is on this that the film relies, heavily, for its central frisson: is the man Alex comes to desire the real killer? Because, in *Jagged Edge*, it was precisely the lawyer's desire which prevented her making this perception about her client. Unlike the old *films noirs* where the plot unravelled through the eyes of the male protagonist, this new type of post-*Coma* thriller takes us through events mainly through the subjectivity of the woman. And just as the old *films noirs* offered the hero a choice of good and bad women, here the heroine is offered an ambiguous choice of good and bad men.

For Kendall's opposite is Alex's ex-husband. Played by Raul Julia (the straight revolutionary in prison with William Hurt in *Kiss of the Spiderwoman*) he is initially Alex's closest friend and adviser. He is also a hairdresser, sexually 'ambiguous' and non-white. His foreignness is emphasised by his name — Joaquin Manero — and his sexual ambivalence in his nickname, Jacky ('all hairdressers are called Jacky' says the super-straight Kendall). An outsider, Jacky's aspirations to enter upper-class WASP circles are ultimately his downfall, so that he is both villain and victim. In one central exchange Alex says to him, 'You've been on the outside long enough, now you want in . . . all that breeding, all that early American stuff.' The fact that the whole film takes place over Thanksgiving underlines this theme; but the plot ultimately shows how corrupt the 'top' All-Americans are.

So who really represents 'all that early

TRAILERS

An African double bill, *Ceddo* and *Certificate of Poverty*, plays at the Tyneside cinema on 14 June, followed by the *cinema-vérité* narrative *Letter From My Village* on 18 June. Details from 091-232 8289.

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American stuff' in the movie? The red-neck ex-cop with the heart of gold, who talks about spiks and spades, who assumes that a hairdresser must be gay, who doesn't believe in divorce and who *repairs things*. Kendall's handiness in the workshop is strongly reminiscent of Ally Fox in *Mosquito Coast*. He is the real raw material of Americanness. But the most unpleasant thing about the film is that his 'jokey' racism is finally justified in the plot by Jacky's treachery. Meanwhile Kendall himself is remarkably reclaimed from his jokeyness, stops making racist comments and starts wearing tasteful check shirts instead of his tacky brown T-shirt. I will return to *hommes fatales* next week. □

TELEVISION

Dog's life

Hugo Williams

LITTLE BY LITTLE, with its tributes to such modern masters as the Everly Brothers — **Songs of Innocence and Experience** (BBC2) — and Eddie Cochran — **Three Steps to Heaven** (BBC2) — television makes amends for the brightly-coloured chaos it reduces the rest of the world to: three steps to heaven and four steps back. Thanks, anyway.

Watching **Disappearing World** (ITV) about the wonderfully fierce and pragmatic Kayapo Indians who won control of the goldmine in their Amazon territory, it was tempting to hope that Brazil might be making reparation for the same sort of havoc it has wreaked on the rain forests, currently vanishing even faster than our brain cells. Okay, so the Kayapo occupied the airstrip and forced the Brazilians to cough up the promised five per cent of profits, but don't let's pretend they had the government over a barrel exactly, unless they had world opinion as an invisible ally. It seems this may well have been the case. When the Kayapo went into action they had the prescience to record this piece of their history on their video recorder: 'Put in your lip plugs and go for the whites!' said a Chief. The Kayapo have no problem incorporating high tech into their tribal culture, precisely *because* it is still tribal. The Chief showed a fine grasp of the media when he recorded a message to another branch of his tribe: 'My words are like a real Chief speaking to you. They speak for themselves, like real words.' He pressed the 'pause' button as he considered his next phrase.

When the Kayapo are young they sometimes go Brazilian for a while, the way any of us do, and come back with ridiculous haircuts and flip-flops. They also bring back knowledge of the white man's ways. Unusually, however, his seems to have strengthened them in their elaborate beautiful-name bestowing ceremonies and three-month-long tortoise hunting treks, which are like mediaeval progresses through the rain forest. 'Everyone works for the name-receiving child and his parents. Being together makes everyone happy and it brings out the sadness for those who are no longer with us.'

I was relieved to hear that the Kayapo are not all noble savagery and primitive wisdom. Some of their wilder activities are no less idiotic and barbaric than our own. When a brave finds a bees' nest full of fat bees, explained a plausible, Robin Dayish sort of type, he rubs them into his dog so that his dog can find fat tortoises. Later, we saw Sir Robin vigorously massaging a bee-purée into the face of his reluctant hound, an image which struck a chord with this TV-viewer. 'Why aren't you hungry any more?' he asked the dog. 'You've become too tame.'

Sensing that his next action might need some glossing for the uneducated outsider, he spoke directly to camera for a moment. 'Now I'm going to shove the bee mixture up the dog's arse.' He was as good as his word. The unfortunate animal spread its legs and whimpered tolerantly, as if there were some things one had to put up with for the sake of one's job.

Another tribe under threat from the super-nations of commerce and expediency are the small shopkeepers — those dream acquaintances whose homes one wanders into when one runs out of butter, bread or milk. Ray Brooks' toddle round Mortlake Terrace in Kew, **Talking Shop** (C4), made me resolve not to use the new Sainsbury's near me any more. 'They're very important,' said Brooks of the small shops. 'The trouble is, we won't miss them till they're gone.'

Everyone's favourite is an ironmonger's and ironmonger Ken Richardson was no exception. 'I come down in the morning quite frequently and say hello to my little shop and I feel thoroughly at home.' You could almost smell the pitch and linseed oil as he flogged someone a doormat.

I love to hear the central drama of a trade laid down by some long-exasperated practitioner. Eileen Griffin, of Merlin's Cleaners, pin-pointed the bane of a dry-cleaner's life as the person who comes in saying something isn't really dirty, could she 'freshen it up' for them. 'These are filthy things, mind you,' she said, 'completely dirty, with stained underarms and crotches, covered in grease marks . . .' As she spoke, one got an impression of an incontinent old tramp entering her spotless establishment, proferring his unspeakable trousers and asking her to 'freshen them up' for him.

Mortlake Terrace even boasts a modest haberdashery, though its few archaic drawers have been subsumed into the back of Elliott's family CTN (confectionery, tobacco, news). Paul Elliott acknowledged that there were special difficulties working so close to your family, but wouldn't have it any other way in the end. 'You don't give the shop a second thought, because you know it's in good hands.'

That seemed a good example of the virtues of the tribe: you don't give the boring stuff a second thought; it's all taken care of by ritual and tradition, leaving you free to paint your face purple or stuff bees up your dog's arse, depending on your temperament.

The systems of cogs and pulleys by which Tom Sharpe cranked up his exaggerations for **Porterhouse Blue** (ITV) could be heard working a mile off. What was I supposed to be doing with my leg muscles while all that pastiche Black Rod stuff was going on outside the college gates in Latin? Kicking the set in? I came close. The money, visibly, audibly and crassly wasted on this prestigious twaddle brought back Eddie's immortal caution to the great: 'Now Dan had all the money. He also had the looks. But Shorty must've had something more that can't be found in books. Cut across Shorty, Shorty cut across. That's what Miss Lucy said.' □

ARCHITECTURE

Rule of foot

Jules Lubbock

THE DESTRUCTION of the once-magnificent London skyline, centring upon the Dome of St Paul's, was a grotesque accident; one which resulted from bad planning legislation as surely as traffic accidents result from bad roads. Nobody meant it to happen and, once it began to happen, in the mid 1960s, nobody seemed to know how to stop it other than by the repeated efforts of protesters at endless public inquiries — like the marathon one three years ago into Mr Palumbo's Mies van der Rohe tower at Mansion House Square.

But this system of public inquiry into each individual proposal, and these great emergency campaigns to Save the Architectural Heritage, exhilarating as they may be, are stupid and time consuming. Moreover, for the Palumbos of this world, they are simply steps in a process of attrition to get what they want in the end. So I've decided to run my own campaign to get rid of the whole existing system and, as part of this, I shall be giving evidence this morning to yet another Public Inquiry: the inquiry into the City of London Local Plan that will determine the rules by which all future building proposals in the City will be judged, whether or not they go to inquiry. Yet this crucial inquiry, part of the very legislative process itself, the outcome of which will form the underlying blueprint for future offices and which will either rescue or further disfigure what remains of our national skyline, has attracted no public attention at all.

This is partly because the GLC is no longer there to put the case of Londoners; partly because the Labour controlled Inner London boroughs do not seem to care enough about the environment to put in objections (the honourable exception is Tory-controlled Westminster, which has objected in detail to the provisions for controlling high buildings); partly because the conservation societies like SAVE haven't the wit to understand that good legislation and hard-and-fast rules make these great emergencies unnecessary.

My researches have shown that the very spirit of modern town planning is permissiveness taken to a ludicrous extreme — and even more absurd in that it is based upon the requirement that property developers have to ask permission in the first place. For example, until 1965, under the London Building Acts, there was a law in force which prohibited the construction of any building over 100 foot within the LCC. Here was an old-fashioned, hard-and-fast rule, with a sensible waiver clause which gave the LCC the right to grant permission in some cases. But the notorious 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, 40 years old this year, was designed to allow planners to override such simple prohibitions — what was called 'bye-law' legislation — in the interests of artistic license. So they produced a new set of criteria of the kind 'High Buildings must not spoil traditional views and attractive surroundings', which were totally meaningless and incapable of holding water should developers use their right of appeal against refusal. The result is what we see

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around us.

But why such permissiveness in the first place? The answer is a curious one — it is that the town planning legislation was drafted by architects; not, as it happens, nasty, hard-edged, foreign modernist architects like Mies van der Rohe or Le Corbusier, but the nice, cosy, tweedy Arts-and-Craftsy home-grown variety, such as Raymond Unwin who designed Hampstead Garden Suburb and Letchworth. He hated hard-and-fast bye-laws because he wanted to win the freedom for architects to 'express themselves' from the Borough Engineers and Surveyors who cared only about drains and light and fresh air and health. The 1947 Town Planning Act represented the victory of the architectural profession over the others and, gradually, architect-trained town planners replaced the other professions.

The watchwords of these artistic architects were 'elasticity' and 'flexibility' and their great catchphrase was 'every proposal must be treated *on its merits*'. The artistic licence so obtained has been used not to create pretty groupings of red-brick cottages but ugly clusters of city-centre offices. My modest proposal is to repeal existing town planning legislation and replace it by the kind of hard-and-fast, mandatory regulation which it superceded. This would be to everyone's advantage. The re-introduction of an absolute height limit of 100 feet would mean that as tall offices — which have, in fact, become white elephants — are redeveloped the skylines of our major cities would slowly re-emerge. From the developers' side the whole planning process would be speeded up because there would be no rules to bend; no architect-planners to bend either. Nor am I fighting a lost cause: the GLC before abolition was moving towards a system of mandatory controls.

Finally, Mr Palumbo is at it again, this time with a new proposal to pull down the listed buildings on the Mappin and Webb site. He wants to build a heavy, intrusive block, admittedly within the 100-foot limit, designed by James Stirling. SAVE, so notoriously absent from the Inquiry into the City of London Plan, is mounting one of its campaigns. But, if the protection of listed buildings were mandatory, there would be no need. Palumbo, whose Mies tower would have been obsolete had he been able to build it, and who was saved by the objectors, can only be stopped in his megalomaniac Ludwigian tracks by strong, simple laws. □

Arts Line
for information about access for disabled people to cinemas, theatre, galleries and concert venues in London, ring 01-388 2227/8.

THEATRE

Taken to the edge

Victoria Radin

Pain of Youth
FERDINAND BRUCKNER *Gate Theatre*
My Sister in this House
WENDY KESSELMAN *Hampstead Theatre Club*

LAST WEEK the Bush Theatre in London burnt to a cinder during rehearsals of a play entitled — gruesomely, it now appears — *Effie's Burning*. Like the rest of us, this tiny and obdurately uncomfortable pub-theatre, bastion of the best new writing (Snoo Wilson's, for example) and venue to the most inspired non text-based work (Mike Bradwell's wonderfully witty and humane slices of British life) is under-insured. It needs help. There will be a benefit performance at its more glossy rival, the Royal Court, in July.

Meanwhile, its neighbour, the Gate Theatre, even smaller but perhaps marginally more comfortable (church pews and a giant overhead fan lifting your hair from your scalp should the play fail to do so) has also become a compulsory vantage point for the best of London's theatre. Always a home for *trouvailles* of the European classical theatre, it now boasts such works — the sort of thing on which the big subsidised houses seem in the main to have turned their backs — in extremely agreeable productions. The staging of Ferdinand Bruckner's *Pain of Youth* in its English-language premiere, by the actress turned director Patti Love, has more truthfulness and vitality than anything else in London.

Bruckner was born in the same Vienna that brought forth Freud and Arthur Schnitzler; like that pair he attended medical school; and he too made the same *mal de siècle* equation of sex with destruction and death. *Pain of Youth*, his first play, written when he was slightly younger than the century in 1926, takes that equation to a kind of final solution which would have provided ample material for Dr Freud. At its end the vampirism that has been hovering as one of the themes is implemented as a young man kills a young woman, on request, by sinking his teeth into her neck during the act of love.

They are, as are most of the play's characters, medical students; and they are leagues away from the bright-eyed, sports-playing, outwardly directed catchment of medicos we know here. Even that maverick Jonathan Miller might have acknowledged them, shuddered and gone on. Freder, a cocaine-sniffing, silver flask-carrying and, naturally, chain-smoking, failed medical student is, until he becomes a real vampire, the psychological kind. Dumping the Duke's daughter (also a medical student) for her maid, he proceeds to train that country girl of 17 to steal before setting her up as a streetwalker. In one scene where my hair stood up on its own, Tim Woodward's beefy, sexy Freder takes Ellis Van Maarseveen's malicious little mouse and smears her with her employer's make-up: she smilingly undergoes the defilement until he turns her face to a mirror where the results of his corruption are as awesomely visible as they were in that attic to Dorian Gray.

Much more unwittingly, the aristocratic Desirée is also a corrupter, whom the delicate Joanne Pearce makes a cross between a young Blanche du Bois and Olivia Channon. Selfish but not cruel, her influence on this introverted group is worse because she is oblivious to it. A sort of Sylvia Plath without the American good-girl striving, she is unappeasably wounded. Cocaine, drink, sex and, indeed, academic success don't help what could seem an unreasonable passion for pain, were it not for Joanne Pearce's performance — hollow-eyed, white-faced and always trying not to tremble. 'Everyone should kill themselves when they're 17,' she says when she's a few years older. 'After that, it's disappointment.' In another production or in another play the epigram would be merely self-consciously shocking; with Pearce, you can believe her.

Bruckner threads the play with a sense of where his characters have come from — if not of where they're going to, which is spiritually nowhere. Irene (Paula Stockbridge) is contemptuously discovered by her love-rival Marie to be a porter's daughter who changed her name from Irma. Marie herself is a builder's daughter who comes from the same hick town as the maid: alone together, Marie offers her a chocolate and in this production the two actresses (both European and German speakers) sit conversing in German before the maid bows out of the room. Patti Love's staging gives one a good sense of the unease behind the changing social mores of the time; it also explores Bruckner's sense of the ambiguity of human relations, where feelings change moment to moment and a woman like Marie can at once implore her rejecting lover to hit her while at the same time proudly ordering him out of the house. Sylvia Rotter is wonderfully compelling as Marie — proud, passionate, giving and ultimately victim of everyone on the premises, who also include Paul Mooney as her 'little boy' lover and Jonathan Oliver's generous performance of the played-out, slightly older Dr Alt, who served time for administering euthanasia to a dying child (the parallel for this is Freder's compliance with the suicidal Desirée's request for veronal) and who believes that 'every genius ends up in jail'. Well, so did Oscar Wilde. It is useful to remember, in our drearily, healthily striving new society, how much of the outlaw and misfit exist in all of us; and this is borne out by this production in which the four very strong actresses especially go, European-style, right to the edge but never over the top.

The American playwright Wendy Kesselman's award-winning **My Sister in this House** seethes with compelling themes — mothers and daughters, sisters, below and above stairs and, above all, power games. Based on the same incident that inspired Genet's *The Maids* — the murder in Le Mans, in 1930, of a mother and daughter by their maids — it concerns one of the great crimes of history, and Kesselman's play, with a great deal of help from Nancy Meckler's direction, crammed with domestic detail, tries to explore why two meek underlings might rise to a violence which included the tearing out of eyes from their sockets, the optic nerve still dangling. But there clings to the play — even, to some extent, the production — a certain dulling dustiness. □

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WORK IN PROGRESS

Festival harvest

Naseem Khan

I AM DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS of festivals, believing them, with certain exceptions, to be either a) a random grouping of what happens to be around, b) an excuse for not developing and funding a proper year-round arts strategy, or c) a thinly-veiled excuse (as with festivals set up by major stores) to get people into promoters' shops, businesses, theme parks, etc.

Glasgow's Mayfest, whose community side I looked at two weeks ago, is on the side of the angels in that murky world. But even Mayfest has had its shortcomings. The visual arts in particular have never sat too easily under its umbrella (though not as uneasily as music, this year the cause of a storm in a tea-cup).

The city's art galleries, having received no money for the festival, have responded by mounting 'Mayfest exhibitions' that vary greatly in quality and relevance. It has been one of Mayfest's unsatisfactory aspects and, given the sturdiness of Glasgow's contemporary art scene, has been, even more, a wasted opportunity. This year, however, there was a change. The galleries, said Chris Carell, director of the Third Eye Centre, realising they hadn't done themselves justice, had tried to encourage stronger exhibitions in terms of their own spaces. The result — a greater emphasis on new, young work — was immediately noticeable, even in the brochure. Although notable spaces were missing — the prestigious Kelvingrove Art Gallery would have been an asset — the overall mood was energetic. It was given greater point by one commission and one accident.

The accident was quite the best thing about Mayfest — a life-size locomotive, made by George Wyllie, out of straw, dangling from a crane high above the Clyde. It was, in fact, the Glasgow component for a national arts event, TSWA 3D, sponsored by Television South West and South West Arts and launched as Mayfest started. But at certain points for miles around you could see Wyllie's locomotive, poised like a question mark high in the air — over the roofs of Govan, near the emptying shipyards of the Clyde . . .

Surprisingly, the commission — Mayfest's first — did not equal Wyllie's locomotive for vibrancy. Seven photographers — picked for their diversity of working methods and concerns — had been commissioned 'to celebrate the new-found confidence of Glasgow'. The results, in a large exhibition at the Collins Gallery, were oddly private and small.

The photographers had nibbled at different aspects of Glasgow. Thomas Joshua Cooper had explored its outer rural perimeters with his careful black-and-white records of season changes and land sweep. Andy Goldsworthy had laid his strings of golden leaves and — more unusually — hung a glowing punch-ball of leaves from bushes in various Glasgow parks. Ron O'Donnell's absurd and forceful full-colour photographs of constructed installations were to be seen to better advantage and in greater numbers in the exhibition he shared with Calum Colvin at Glasgow Arts Centre. Glyn Saterley, meanwhile, had found an eerie side of the city for his black-and-white pictures — high up on unpeopled estates; emerging, on a par with the angel, at the top of City Chambers; with billowing roof-top washing on the skyline. His pictures came the nearest to uniting public places and private perceptions.

But to talk about the character of a place is to tread on shaky ground. What is Glasgow? Is it the ever-growing yuppiedom of its centre, with its burgeoning wine bars and trendy gear? There is certainly new-found confidence here, and real money. Or is it the workless 'schemes', dreary Clydeside abutting the site for next year's mammoth Gardens Festival? Or the outspoken bloody-mindedness of the largely female audience with whom I watched *The Steamie* in a local community centre? 'We canna smoke,' one cross woman called to her puffing mates, 'I dunno why . . .'

The strength of Mayfest is that it doesn't duck the disparities. If it did, it would have lost its way. As it is, the festival is still a platform for local endeavour. Six young artists, for instance, had worked day and night to turn the huge top floor of an old factory into a magnificent temporary gallery. And the live arts provided their own commentary. The Glasgow Citizens and 7:84 Scotland revived Robert McLeish's *Gorbals Story* (reviewd by Paul Allen in *NS* 29 May), a large mirror of 1940s tenement life. The Tron Theatre and Borderline Theatre Company had an adaptation of J. MacDougall Hay's *Gillespie* in which the archetypal force of capitalist greed destroys a fishing community. Morag Fullarton's production, a model of confidence and clarity, gave credence to passions that otherwise might have swamped the small Tron. In the Third Eye Centre, four Scottish writers read their work (all Mayfest's literary events, incidentally, sold out).

However, the anthology in which the work — chosen from an impressively large submission from writers' workshops — should have appeared, hasn't yet managed to raise enough money to be printed. Perhaps this is a role for future Mayfests? As the event's organiser, Carl MacDougall, pointed out, business sponsorship is still wary of literature. A festival should leave tangible assets behind.

As it is, the intangible assets seem in good shape. There's a good mix of Scottish work with the stimulus of the new, of avant garde with popular traditional; there's the start of special commissions.

And there are signs that an audience is being created for the arts during the rest of the year. It's almost enough to make you believe in festivals again. □

Books

PUBLISHING

Poets, priests and politics

Denise Harvey

Our occasional series on publishing in Europe continues with a report from Athens

'A GREEK HAS two ambitions, to publish his poems or become a publisher — and publish he will, even if he spends his whole inheritance on it.' So said a Greek publisher, with something of a gesture of despair, as he tried to explain what perhaps is the most astonishing aspect of the Greek literary scene: the extraordinary number of collections of poetry that are published each year.

Bank manager, postman, civil servant, candle-maker — the story is the same: given the slightest encouragement they will open up a drawer in their desk or work-bench and hand you their latest slim volume of poems, usually brought out at their own expense under the imprint of one of the 600-odd publishers that currently operate in Greece. But there is no taint attached to paying for the publication of one's own work: so began most, if not all, of Greece's major poets, and the most renowned of Athenian publishing houses is not averse to production costs being met by the author when there's not likely to be much in the way of sales.

Why this devotion to poetry? Since the emergence of the modern Greek nation some 150 years ago there has always been what one could call a national poet, who often assumes the status of a national hero. Greece's two recipients of the Nobel Prize for Literature, George Seferis (1963) and Odysseus Elytis (1979)* are both poets, and it was Seferis who, at considerable personal risk, issued a public statement against the Greek junta from his home in Athens in 1969; while the fine passenger ship *Odysseus Elytis* ferries thousands of summer visitors from Piraeus to the poet's native island, Mytilene. The first edition (10,000 copies) of a new work by Elytis sells out in the first month. Yannis Ritsos still remains the major poetic voice of the left. A committed Communist, he was exiled and imprisoned during both the Greek civil war and the Papadopoulos dictatorship. Today, at the age of 78, his prolific output continues: he has published over 80 collections and they go on selling 'by the bucketful', as a bookseller once told me.

Over the last decade or so, this commitment to poetry has been complemented by a growing interest in literary works as a whole. They have now stolen the market from books dealing with political, social or economic themes, national or international, to such an extent that today over half the total book production in Greece is devoted to them. The military dictatorship of Papadopoulos (1967-74) acted as something of a catalyst to Greek publishing. Relaxation of

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Voices of Greece: poets Odysseus Elytis (left), George Seferis (centre) and Yannis Ritsos (right)

censorship in the early 1970s resulted in a spate of new publishing houses producing books covering the whole spectrum of left-wing politics. This went hand in hand with the burgeoning student movement, whose climax was the dramatic events at the Athens Polytechnic (1973) so crucial to the junta's overthrow. A further burst of publishing followed the junta's demise, with more than 50 publishing concerns either founded or re-established, including the two houses connected with the Greek Communist Parties of the Exterior (Stalinists) and the Interior (Eurocommunists). A number of left journals and magazines were launched at the same time, including *Anti* (whose name can mean 'Alternative' as well as 'Anti'). Avowedly Eurocommunist and perhaps the most stable and well-informed and non-extreme of the left periodicals, it continues today with a steady circulation of about 25,000 copies.

The flood of political publishing lasted for about three years. Then, in 1978, as the party support on which a number of publishers had relied was withdrawn, several houses had to close down, and there followed a craze for science fiction and foreign literature — Poe, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud were particularly in vogue — as well as for fiction by Greek writers. Beat and underground, anarchist and anti-authoritarian writing established a small but faithful following (for example, at least 60 books were published on Dada and surrealism alone in this period). And the women's movement began to make itself heard.

The popularity of European and American literature continues unabated today (although, alas, many fine works are execrably translated), and currently topping the bestselling charts are Eco's *The Name of the Rose* and Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. But, in native literary works, whether prose or poetry, a new note has been discernible in the last few years.

The Greeks as a nation, confused by their classical heritage, 400 years of Turkish occupation, subsequent pressure and intervention from various foreign powers, and the influx of modern western ideologies, are continually searching to disentangle their true cultural roots. It is a preoccupation whose intensity has perhaps no equal in any other European country; in pursuing it over the last six or seven years more and more Greeks have been discovering or rediscovering their own religious tradition, that of Orthodox Christianity. The influence of such writers as Stelios Ramfos, once a committed marxist but now an advocate of the application of Orthodox criteria to ideological interpretation and to social, political and educational problems, is considerable, as is that of communist-Christian journalists like Kostas Moskof or commentators like Kostas Zourallis who, while still retaining some of their left-wing allegiances, nevertheless frequently consult their spiritual directors, the abbots of certain monasteries on Mount Athos. Possibly the most respected literary critic in Greece today, Zisimos Lorenzatos, is avowedly Orthodox, and the same is true of one of the increasingly prominent magazines of literary, social and contemporary comment, *Synaxis*. A number of new periodicals, among them *Erourem, Planodio* and *Evnostos*, mostly founded and run by the younger generation, attempt to come to grips with what is meant by tradition, and rather than compartmentalise history, literature and religion, instead recognise their inextricable interdependence.

Yet alongside this a harsher, more caustic note is being sounded. It is not perhaps a note of despair, but it is certainly one of disillusion, especially with the Greek left. The international prestige of the Greek expatriate and former libertarian marxist Cornelius Castoriadis has ensured that his works have been consistently translated and widely read in Greece; and his decades-long attacks on Communists (extended, in his recent work, *Domaines de l'homme*, to the left as a whole) have had much the same impact in Greece as they have had in France. Closer to home, though, are the harrowing confessions in a current best-seller, *Lucky You Were Killed Early*, which has sold more than 50,000 copies in 13 editions within two years, in a land where a single edition of 2,000-3,000 is the average. Written by Chronis Missios, the book recounts, largely through personal experience often of the most excruciating and brutal kind (Missios has spent long years in prison for his political convictions, years which included periods of torture and expectation of execution), the progressive betrayal at the hands of the party leaders of the 'revolutionary tradition' of the Greek Communist Party. Missios charts his disillusion unsparingly and his denunciations are without self-pity; but he offers no new vision, still less any consolation. One leading publisher, Dimitrios Mavropoulos, went so far as to say that as a nation the Greeks were exhausted. 'It's the end of the Greeks,' he said. But that, I suspect, is the last thing he really believes. □

**George Seferis'* Collected Poems *are published in English translation by Anvil at £10; Odysseus Elytis' Collection* The Axion Esti *is also published by Anvil at £5.95.*

FICTION

Young mariner

Michèle Roberts

Close Quarters
WILLIAM GOLDING *Faber* £9.95

VOLUME TWO of Edmund Talbot's diary sees our hero still aboard his lumbering man o' war *en route* for the Antipodes and a prospective career in colonial administration. A chance meeting in mid-ocean with His Majesty's frigate *Alcyone* brings news of Bonaparte's defeat and abdication and provides for Edmund's simultaneous collapse at first sight of the lovely Marion Chumley, lost to him soon afterwards when *Alcyone* alters course

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and sails off into the sunset. The passage from war to peace sees the ship and its men caught in the *doldrums*, with dangerous results.

For several chapters I was becalmed in boredom, irritated by long-winded conversations worthy of the Ancient Mariner, a positive hail of exclamation marks and the provision of too much background information. Closer attention to the text, however, provided a sighting of a glorious spoof of Boys' Own *navel* adventures, a reading haunted by the ghosts of Jane Austen, Goethe and Freud; and from then on I sailed along merrily under full canvas.

Talbot's rite of passage towards adulthood, with its concomitant recognition of sexual difference and death, turns out to be so fraught with difficulty that it suffers a sea change and almost goes into reverse. The surface of his narrative, awash with conventional meanings (femininity constantly approximated to weakness), is increasingly disrupted by monstrous thoughts swimming up from the unconscious. The traumatic loss of his beloved forces Talbot into poetry, irrationality and incoherence, and turns him into a satirised version of the swooning heroine of Romantic fiction, the sort who is able to dash off a letter to her mama in the very moment of abduction. Coming round from a faint after witnessing the suicide of his servant, he finds himself cradled in the lap of a lady passenger, Mrs Brocklebank, and pronounced a 'poor boy' who has 'far more sensibility than he knows'.

This is the Mrs Brocklebank of whom he has previously remarked: '[she] was, in good weather, a pretty little thing, and I had enjoyed the few moments of conversation I had ever passed with her. Indeed, in those distant days before we lost our masts — but that is irrelevant'.

Loss of their *masts* indeed produces some unconventional behaviour amongst the gents on the ship. As the sea suckles and bounces them and threatens to flood in and drown them like milk from some nasty old bad breast, Talbot suffers increasingly from the vapours, Mr Pike dissolves into tears over his children's possible fate, Mr Brocklebank takes to a shawl and ties on his beaver with a lady's stocking, and the ship's officers twinkle archly at one another (and I should not be a bit surprised if Vol. Three does not reveal that the glamorous blond Mr Benet is wearing drag). Talbot, unable to touch the 'innocent image' of Marion Chumley with 'the furthest-off intimation of physical desire' transforms her into a 'phantom' (not even a Chum) driving him to 'acts of sheer folly'.

Enter the uncanny, as a huge weight of weed is laboriously scraped off the hull of the ship and the apalled men see pushing up through it 'something like the crown of a head . . . someone screamed by my shoulder, a horrible, male scream'. Talbot's magic formula — 'I am a man. I am more than blind nature' — fails him. Male envy and male lack are consoled by the production of literature: Talbot consigns his journals to a barrel which will survive the threatened shipwreck.

The, er, climax of the book is reached when Talbot and his friend Summers clasp hands with a 'thrilling and manly grip'. Talbot adds a postscript: 'The happiness of our "happy" ship changed in quality and became what I can only call a communal hysteria. Nor was it womanish as the word suggests.' No, indeed. □

FICTION

Godgame

Oliver Harris

Work and Play
CARLO GÉBLER *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95

IT WOULD BE a pity if Carlo Gébler's prodigious rate of production should outstrip his development as a writer, since his third novel in three years is clearly the work of an accomplished and promising talent.

Work and Play, both stylistically more ambitious and dramatically more interesting than the modest achievements of *The Eleventh Summer* (1985) and *August in July* (1986), carries on from where its predecessors left off. Fergus Maguire thus shares with Gébler's earlier protagonists a need and aptitude for reverie, for regressing to the guilt-ridden childhood origins of present anxiety and alienation. Repeating the pattern, Fergus cannot move forward until he has stopped looking back.

In Gébler's first novel, Paul Weismann, returning from West London to his native West of Ireland and recalling the unhappiness of his traumatic eleventh year there, concluded with the intention to redeem and polish up his past by writing it down.

Likewise, August Slemic, remembering the Warsaw of his youth from a drab and timid existence as an aging London estate agent, attempted to salvage some sense of self by turning his grief into narrative. The fidelity with which Gébler charted their circular and self-preoccupied ambitions failed, however, to transcend the claustrophobic vision of Paul's homespun misery or the plodding prose of August's frustrated tale. *Work and Play*, with its more flexible structure and livelier action, reworks similar material into a fictional texture of far more colour, sophistication and elegance.

Fergus' story begins in Dublin, where, estranged from his family and cut out of his father's will, his emotional climate mirrors the 'Airfix grey' of the Irish sky. Fleeing to England with nothing resolved, he soon confronts his recent surrender to the escapist comfort of heroin, deadly balm for the painful truism that 'life is short and not sweet'. Facing the choice between passivity and choice itself, and struggling to shape a future free of his past, Fergus finds his life immediately twisting out of control.

The lightbulbs explode at random in the Shepherd's Bush flat which Fergus may or may not be sharing with a poltergeist called Fred and where his Asian neighbours are subject to far from supernatural racist violence. Cocaine-induced high-jinks in a restaurant with his socialite friends are followed by arrest and interrogation at the hands of the insinuating Inspector Curry, while a mysterious Mr Wiggins unrelentingly pesters him with outrageous conspiracy theories. As the pace hots up, it becomes harder to separate out the narrative's red herrings from Fergus' sense of complicity in his own fate. Some ominous train of events seems to have been set in motion, a curse corresponding to his inner drive to self-destruction and moral doubt.

The fragility of life, reflected in the recurrent imagery of breaking glass, is brought home; '"A stranger punches a law-abiding citizen in the street and the victim goes nuts" . . . We're so frail it only takes the smallest thing to send us haywire.' The paranoid Wiggins, he realises, represents the fate of those who reach the brink of endangered solipsism and never recover a balanced sense of the rocky world outside.

Fergus sees himself standing before the unseen and unblinking 'eyes' that are his silent judges, the cold recorders of black marks against his conscience since childhood. It is at this point that Fegus' bewilderment and the book's intrigues invoke the spirit of *The Magus*. Fowles' godgame concluded with the disappearance of the puppeteers and moral examiners: 'There were no watching eyes . . . The theatre was empty. It was not a theatre.' At the end of *Work and Play*, Fergus too sees the sky as existentially empty: 'There was

Stag

John Levett

The last thrill fades, the specialised
Nerve endings draw into their skins,
We come apart on giant-sized
Discourtesies and swollen grins;
The brackens wag, an airless heat
Inflates the veins that thread your feet.

I lift my belly and unscroll
The Durex with its ambushed sperm;
White dreams gone down the rabbit hole,
Dead embryos to keep us warm:
A handful of genetic slack
Runs down its screwed-up cul-de-sac.

Shifting camp the deer trek down
To see what's happened; as you turn
Their heads poke out and antlers crown
Cool looks of startled unconcern:
Impressionistic bushes yield
Soft heads on an impromtu shield.

They watch as we slide down the hill
With bags and camera, keys and shoes,
Outsize, discoloured, vulnerable,
Two sunlit backs a cloud pursues;
A month of dying grass and air
Supports their brown, corrective stare.

Tonight you'll like in bed with him
Bruised and stung and sore inside
As sleep comes down and lets you climb
Into our freshly trampled hide,
And from its bushes, as you wake,
Imaginary horns will break.

As winner of this year's Yorkshire Open Poetry Competition, 'Stag' should have been published in the Yorkshire Post*; that paper having had an abrupt change of mind, the* Statesman *is pleased to be the poem's first publisher.*

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no continuous assessment.' He is therefore free to act, free to accept responsibility.

Having cut through the tangled web of Fergus' experience and discarded its teasing loose ends, Gébler closes, however, on an up-beat note whose sense of triumph rings hollow. The final beatific vision of beckoning 'undreamt of and unexpected consolations' — imaged as a sun-soaked holiday idyll with his girlfriend — is too glib and conventional a reward. The disappointment of its ending limits, rather than undermines, the force of a story which, in retrospect, seems to play rather inadequately at creating unsettling *frissons* or conveying the process of inner struggle. To be really convincing, rather than entertaining, inevitably requires harder work. □

FEMINISM

Body and soul

Lynne Segal

Female Sexualisation
ed. FRIGGA HAUG *Verso* £24.95 & £8.95

Christ, here we go again,
Frigga says,
Nora's frightful politics
hara-kiri style

WHAT A BOOK to have to review! The indomitable German marxist and feminist Frigga Haug edits the memories and theorising of women from the two socialist feminist groups she has initiated in Hamburg and Berlin. They are all part of the autonomous women's editorial group of West Germany's oldest surviving journal of marxist theory, *Das Argument*, and, as Nora Räthzel explains in the preface, have set themselves the dual task of reconstructing scientific work along feminist lines, and remodelling marxist thought to include women. Daunting tasks.

The immediate aim of *Female Sexualisation* is to analyse women's socialisation, and it offers a rich variety of evidence to support its hypothesis that 'in girls, the process of individual socialisation is synonymous with the sexualisation of the body and its parts'. The grander aim of the book is 'to counter unhappiness with the struggle to be happy . . . to change the world lovingly', and it expresses the great ambitions of the women from *Das Argument*, ambitions which sound rather astonishing amidst the pessimistic politics of the present. But, though such confidence may conjure up the complacency of North American growth psychology, we find here its very antithesis: an unexpected and difficult amalgam of immediately opposing theoretical traditions: classic marxism and contemporary Foucauldianism, feminist consciousness-raising and post-Lacanian discourse analysis.

The inspiration for the reflections we find here is outlined in Frigga Haug's opening chapter on 'memory work'. It provides the key which enables these authors to move to and fro between personal experience, collective group work and theoretical analysis.

As a research method it arises out of the work Frigga Haug and others have begun elsewhere towards developing a critical psychology: a psychology — rather like that of Rom Harré in this country — which sees people as active and interested participants in psychological research, rather than as passive objects of study. Through co-operative group work the object of study is at one and the same time the subject of the research, allowing for her growth and change. Built into this research methodology are sets of procedures and rules for gathering information, analysing data and assessing its validity.

Information is collected through participants writing down their own stories, in this case the stories of events in which they have learned to behave in 'feminine' ways, putting in all the detail they remember, even the most apparently inconsequential. In this way private experience is translated into public experience, where it is analysed alongside the study of language, proverbs, literature and all aspects of conventional wisdom about women, breaking down the barriers between literature and ordinary language use. Memory work is more than consciousness-raising because of 'the arduous task of theoretical analysis' which follows the initial reconstruction of memories: a task which uses various complex strategems to bring to light the gaps, omissions, tensions, contradictions, value judgments and clichéd thinking which, from our individual desires for harmony, produce the false coherence, the self-delusions of constructed memory.

What we gain from this analysis — participants and readers alike, it is hoped — is an account of the processes involved in the performance of conventional femininity: the personal way in which women come to participate *actively* in our own socialisation, our own subordination. This involves not the acquisition of any fixed elements of femininity, but rather the more or less competent performance of 'feminine' skills. Recalling their personal histories of the relationship between hair, stomach, legs, posture, clothing and the protests, resistances or acceptance of gender identity, these authors suggest that 'It is around our bodies that we [women] construct our identities.'

The pleasure gained from the competent performance of 'feminine' skills, and the emotional investment we have in them, explain why it is so very hard to change ourselves, why we oppose change, even when, as women, we have acquired only the 'slavegirlishness' of femininity: 'It is not only relations between the sexes, but equally our own relations to our bodies which contradict [any] simple solutions . . . Writing the stories of our bodies has seemed to us a first faltering attempt to arrange a new social perception of the multiple connections we inhabit, with a view to developing a different organisation.'

The strength of this book lies in its rejection of the essentialism and naturalism present in so much feminist writing on the body, where 'femininity' and women's sexuality is seen as in some way natural, but distorted by the power of men. Here women's bodies do not *contain* any particular type of sexuality, repressed or otherwise. Instead, drawing upon Foucault, the book sees women's bodies as the site of multiple definitions, through various discourses, all of them connected with 'the sexual'. But this book also criticises and extends Foucauldian discourse analysis by addressing, which Foucault extraordinarily does not, the power structures of gender. And it re-introduces, what Foucault has marginalised, the role of the state and questions of class. And finally, this book, unlike discourse analysis, outlines a liberatory practice.

The method of memory work and the rich theoretical work on which it draws do seem to me to provide us with new resources for re-thinking the construction of femininity, and how to change it. However, the very ambitiousness of the book contributes to its weaknesses. The movement from personal experience to diverse and difficult theoretical analysis, which is at times rather sketchy, makes for difficult reading. And I have a larger problem. I remain less than convinced of its central hypothesis: I suspect that female socialisation is even more complex and contradictory than these authors suggest. I am sure that it includes, but I doubt that it reduces to, the sexualisation of the female body. But read it, and draw your own conclusions. □

ARCHITECTURE

Of the old school

Colin Ward

Towards a Social Architecture: The Role of School Building in Post-War England
ANDREW SAINT *Yale* £19.95

THE POST OFFICE has just issued a set of stamps celebrating British architects in Europe. Maybe the Queen's Award for Industry should also be given to the ego-tripping globe-trotters — Stirling, Lasdun, Foster, Rogers, philatelically-speaking — who have succeeded in doing the local practitioners out of a job. Personality cults and the endless quest for 'originality' stand in the way of achieving a general standard of modest, attractive and trouble-free buildings.

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daunting challenge of post-war school-building to cope not just with the huge backlog of work, movements of population and the Baby Boom, but with the enlarged educational ideals of the 1944 Act. More probably than not, you and your children were taught in the surroundings they devised.

The heroes of this school yarn, whose names are totally unknown to the general public, were a kind of extended family, often literally related, who held key jobs in the Architects and Buildings Branch of the then Ministry of Education; or in certain local authorities like Herts, the LCC and later Notts; or in new, small, left-wing architectural practices. But I doubt if I will ever lick a stamp commemorating Stirrat Johnson-Marshall, whose portrait is the frontispiece of this book, where he is called 'the architectural inspirer, enabler and eminence of English post-war school-building', nor one recording his brother Percy or that other pair of creative brothers, Tony and Oliver Cox. Not even one giving their due to the splendid Quaker couple, Mary and David Medd, who had such a humane influence in the Building Bulletins that flowed from the Ministry, often way ahead of the educational philosophy of the people who really controlled the way teaching was done.

Andrew Saint makes absorbing comparisons between the relative success of the school-building programme and the relative failure of the house-building programme. He is also far too scrupulous a historian to neglect the other side of the way the Ministry's cost limits forced architects to try to stretch the available cash over more schools, by adopting ever more rigorous space standards and ever more questionable building systems. But his conclusions are too gentle and, although I think the *ideology* of those behind that school-building drive was so much more civilised than the architecture-as-self-expression creed that followed it, I must enter a dissenting memo.

For worthy reasons they were in love with the idea of mass-produced building components, made in the civilised factory rather than on the windy, brutal site, and thought that the design disciplines that standardisation imposed were self-evident. But I remember visiting Hills of West Bromwich in 1951. They were the chosen, successful makers of a system for standard school building, but out in the yard was an old man using a Staffa bending machine to produce the elegant, standardised lattice girders *by hand*. 'Any length you like,' he said.

Last year I met a teacher who described the tatty, leaky, noisy and inconvenient school she worked in; rushed up, she took for granted, by the capitalist class to make a quick buck out of educating Grade Two citizens. 'No wonder they grow up alienated from the system,' she said. Slowly it dawned on me that I *knew* that building, lovingly designed by a co-operative of socialist architects in strict conformity with the Ministry guidelines. I knew, too, that the firms that supplied its components — Hills, Holoplast and even the beloved sanitary-ware makers Adamsez of Newcastle — all went into liquidation through following an architectural, rather than a commercial ideal.

The Ministry architects could truly claim that the least useable schools came from the most admired architects, but they went on pressing system-building which, as well as useful systems like CLASP, brought useless ones like MACE. The DES used to have a wall-map of the various consortia of local authorities for school-building. A white patch in the middle stood out as a reproach. This was Buckinghamshire, which insisted on simple, durable schools of brick, tiles and timber. Today they make an interesting contrast with schools built the way the Ministry told us. And every teacher has suffered from the Ministry architects' rational decision that the eight-foot wide corridors of the earliest post-war schools were a wicked waste of space and that staircase-access or five-foot wide corridors were so much more sensible.

This book raises huge questions about central control of centrally orchestrated public investment, about the way in which education was over-sold so that inevitably it became under-funded, and about the absence of user-control in buildings. It tells the story of a heroic failure in a great endeavour. Which is more than can be said for the success of our Euro-architects. □

SCIENCE

In the beginning

William Outhwaite

Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation
ROY BHASKAR *Verso* £9.95

HOW COULD a philosophical account of the objects of scientific inquiry possibly have implications for human emancipation? More broadly, what connection can there be between emancipatory political projects and such an arcane area of philosophy as the philosophy of science, a field which tends to scare off intruders with specialised terminology, mathematical logic and examples from the history of physics?

Roy Bhaskar's answer, in a nutshell, is that science, including social science, requires a philosophical account which construes it as a human social activity aiming to describe and explain the structures of the natural and the social world. Only by recognising the reality of these structures can we have a basis for rationally judging scientific accounts of the world and for evaluating the prospects for the emancipatory transformation of oppressive social structures.

The historical connections between philosophy, science and political theory are, in fact, rather close. It is well known, for instance, that Kant's philosophical system was crucially influenced by Newtonian physics, and that Lenin thought it necessary to develop a substantial critique of Mach's positivist philosophy. More recently, it is interesting to note that two of the most influential contemporary philosophers of science, Karl Popper and Paul Feyerabend, have insisted on the connection between their accounts of science and their conceptions of a free society.

Everything depends however on how these connections are made. Empiricist philosophy started off on the wrong foot by searching for certain foundations of *knowledge*. This entailed a somewhat passive conception of scientific knowledge, as the ordering of our *experiences* of the world, and a rejection of the possibility of deriving practical political conclusions from factual analysis: the so-called is/ought or fact/value problems.

The search for certain foundations of knowledge turned out to be impossible and the attempts, from Kant to Kuhn, to go beyond empiricism in recognising the extent to which we organise our perceptions of the world have set the philosophy of science on a slippery slope towards the position, best represented by Feyerabend, in which 'anything goes', in both science and politics.

Bhaskar's strategy, developed in his first book *A Realist Theory of Science*, was to reformulate the question of the possibility of knowledge by asking what the world must be like in order for science to be possible. Once we put the question this way round, it is immediately clear that the preconditions of science include not only a set of facts about *us* (perceptual capacity, social organisation, etc.) but also the requirement that the world itself be structured and ordered in ways which are independent of our attempts to describe these structures. Human beings are latecomers in the history of the world; philosophers and scientists later still. Scientific experiments are only meaningful if they can give us access to causal tendencies which exist independently of our experimental activity.

In his second book, *The Possibility of Naturalism*, Bhaskar argued that this realist conception of science, as an activity which opens up a complex and structured world, could, with some modifications, be applied to the study of social structures and human action. Social structures are identified by analysis, rather than by experimentation, and, though they depend upon human action and the concepts of actors, they are nevertheless real preconditions of action, both enabling and constraining (and, at the same time, reproduced and transformed by action).

Emancipatory transformation of the social world therefore presupposes an analysis of its structure, partly furnished by social science and yielding alternative explanations to those which purport to show that 'there is no alternative'. The refutation of a scientific theory (which of course presupposes the existence of a common world about which theories differ) yields, trivially, the implication that one should not go on believing it. But it may also — and, in the social world, often does — involve an explanation of the reasons why it was believed and a critique of these circumstances. Marx's critique of political economy, which was also a critique of capitalism, is the classic example of an attempt at an explanatory critique of this kind.

Bhaskar argues that emancipation depends upon 'the transformation of structures, not the alteration or amelioration of states of affairs'. It does not involve a jump into an abstractly conceived realm free of all determinations, but rather consists in the move 'from an unwanted and unneeded to a wanted and needed source of determination'. This might include, for example, a move from a situation where production is determined by the pursuit of private profit and subject to arbitrary fluctuations, to one where it is subject to democratic planning.

Bhaskar's new book consists in a restatement and amplification of the arguments made in the

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previous two and, in the third section, an ambitious critique of positivism as a philosophical ideology; this was in fact the starting point of his philosophical itinerary, but it is fully spelled out for the first time here. He is a thinker of enormous power and originality and writes with a verve which should carry the reader through the more difficult and technical passages in the first few pages and in the third chapter on 'The Positivist Illusion'. It is still a demanding book, best read in conjunction with the previous two, but it will have an important place in the continuing development of what is in my view a fundamental body of work and one which has already had a major influence on modern philosophy and social theory. □

PAPERBACKS

Food and shelter

Peter Kravitz

EXILE, VERTIGO, geometry, men enjoy scratching themselves, vegetarianism, solids into air: these are some of the topics covered by the compendium of fragments gathered by Jonathan Barnes in **Early Greek Philosophy** (Penguin, £4.95). It's as if somebody had been transported back in time and, without shorthand or a tape-recorder, asked to gather as many snatches of what these distant people thought and talked about, whilst remaining unobtrusive. You know the sort of thing — the waiting-rooms of doctors' surgeries, dinner queues, at the public baths . . .

The problem with reading this panoramic book right through is the problem with any collection of aphoristic writings: one good phrase is pushed out by a subsequent yawner.

I took one way out by writing a quote each on half a dozen sheets of white paper and taping them to the mirror in my bedroom. Only, in the flickering present that we inhabit, it's surprising just how quickly the eye gets tired of an image and refuses to take it in afresh. Such transience would have been familiar to the writers and talkers of this volume.

The pioneering volume in English on early Greek philosophy is John Burnet's, published at the turn of the century (and now out of print). Burnet was not just an academic, but one of the most important *general* Scottish thinkers since Hume. His writings on education, though less spectacular than those of his fellow countryman A. S. Neill, still contain many challenges that politicians have yet to take up. One of his students at St Andrews was Willa Muir. Until now, she has been known as the translator of Kafka and Herman Broch. But now, as part of a welcome series of freshly-typeset Scottish classics, Canongate have published her novel **Imagined Corners** (£3.95).

It is set in a mythical Scottish town called 'Calderwick' that is recognisable as the Montrose where she grew up. Elizabeth Shand falls for hunky Hector. However, she is an intellectual given to musings about whether you should coerce people for their own good, the possibility of going beyond good and evil or appearance and reality. In Hector's company she's like a jelly, but when she's on her own is quite in control and able 'to sit down to a book by a philosopher called Bergson, whom she had discovered just before leaving university and who excited her'. Later in the novel, Elizabeth meets up with her namesake Elise, who had left Calderwick for Central Europe and returns to whisk her out of the maelstrom. Elise considers Hector a transient for not remaining with one woman. 'She had studied the tenets of the Saint-Simonians, amongst others, and had accepted Enfantin's classification of temperaments. "Permanents" and "Transients" they had called them in Brussels . . . in those days when one believed in categories . . .'

It is clear enough that Elizabeth/Elise are the two halves of the author, and *Imagined Corners* ends with them coming together in a dialectic. The novel, however, is never anything more than an overplanned metaphysical journey which, with a bit of transfiguration on the way, attempts to fathom the essence behind appearances and the 'oneness' beneath change. So much time is spent setting up parallels and playing out ideas that it doesn't even have much worth as social history. It makes you feel like taking a thick black marker and writing on the cover NO IDEAS BUT IN THINGS!

Some would say that the very length of a novel leaves itself open to this problem. Stories can be written overnight in a burst of energy. Certainly Nelson Algren's novels are inferior to his excellent stories collected in **The Neon Wilderness** (Writers and Readers Inc., £3.95). Like Chuck Brown, he writes what happens before and after the wage packet (or when one isn't even in sight) and about the encounters with police which are the by-products of a citizen just trying to survive. There is a vulnerability in Algren's stories, one that is funny and sad. Without vulnerability, there's no story.

Much great writing has to give some sort of reply to the question How Do You Get By?: food, money, emotional worries, domination. Anyone on the move will be thinking about transport, eats and warmth for a lot of the time. It is no coincidence that Jews run delicatessens and bakers, that immigrants from Italy, China, India and Pakistan run restaurants. The English have never been pushed off their island, they've never *set off* except to conquer. From Calcutta to Hong Kong, all they left were banks and prisons. Joshua Singer's **Of A World That Is No More** (Faber, £4.95) shows that when the Jews were emptied out of the Pale of Settlement nearly 50 years ago, they left stories. There's Reb Mayer who eats rye rolls washed down with castor-oil: Reb Moshe, who chewed his beard and flung the severed hairs inside holy books; and a superb stereotype-shredding portrait of Singer's father who was a devout, passive and easily-placated religious scholar, whereas his mother was 'an accomplished . . . doubter; totally devoted to reason and logic . . . in short, the complete intellectual.' The detailed reminiscences in this volume illustrate how a story retold yields new insights and jokes, where a truth told many times becomes boring.

Bertolt Brecht has an incredible knack of talking in headlines and then upbraiding people for not having a flexible enough response to existence. When I think of his powerful agitprop, flexibility is not the first thing that comes to mind, so his **Diaries 1920-1922** (Methuen, £6.95) were a pleasant surprise.

'I'm strictly provisional . . . because I'm always changing . . . continually forgetting my opinions, can't ever make up my mind to learn them off by heart . . .' He says that a man with one theory is lost — he needs many. Brecht gathers these themes together in the (unfinished) play *Galgei*, that he was working on at the time, with its central character of a supine 'lump of flesh' that is meant to illustrate how malleable human personality can be.

It is this excessive optimism about the degree and speed at which humans can change that led to the disappointment and eventual quietism of the 1968 generation (and their daughters and sons) as they left the 1970s.

The problem with Labour now is its absence of flexible response. If 1968 eased radicals into the institutions of education, media and local state, allowing them to carry the 'truth' inside with them, 1945 sowed the earlier seeds of complacency for Labour. Both these generations seem to have forgotten that politics is about constant striving actively to *make* a political culture. As Nelson Algren write in 1961 as an added preface to his prose-poem *Chicago: City on the Make*, 'The hard necessity of bringing the judge on the bench down into the dock has been the peculiar responsibility of the writer in all ages of man.' Politicians and academics of the left have been bought out of daily experience. Art is all that remains to frighten them out of their slumber. □

Peter Kravitz edits Edinburgh Review.

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Targeted tactical voting

I. MacKillop, Sherborne, Dorset
You hint at a 'minor degree of impartiality' in favour of the Alliance against Labour in the allocation of winnable Tory seats (*NS* 22 May). This deserves greater emphasis; in fact of the 268 seats in which the Alliance finished second behind the Tories, in no less than 189 of them the majority was such that the Tory could not be overtaken even if the Alliance captured the whole of the Labour vote and the Tory vote fell by 2,000 or more.

However, such statistics and indices belong to the suddenly forgotten days when Labour and the Alliance were neck and neck in the opinion polls; with the new situation of a straight fight between Labour and the Tories, the time has come (sorry) to move on to a new concept: targeted tactical voting, or TTV. This is for the use of Labour supporters and can be set down simply as follows: vote Labour *except where your constituency is a marginal between two other parties*. The number of such constituencies is extremely small, as measured against the Alliance's claims; of the 397 Tory MPs returned in 1983, 51 had majorities of under 3,000. Of these, Labour was second in 39 and the Scottish or Welsh Nationalists in three, leaving precisely nine seats where an Alliance candidate is well placed to unseat a Tory, even at the present poll position: Chelmsford (majority 378), Clwyd SW (1,551), Edinburgh W (498), Erith & Crayford (920), Fife NE (2,185), Hazel Grove (2,022), Hereford (2,277), Richmond and Barnes (74) and Stevenage (1,755). (A tenth seat, West Derbyshire, has a Tory majority of 102 over the Alliance but this is the result of a by-election last year in which the Labour vote was squeezed to its limit.) In addition there are four Alliance seats which are liable to be captured by the Tories: Gordon (850), Montgomery (668), Ross, Cromarty and Skye (1,704) and Stockton S (102).

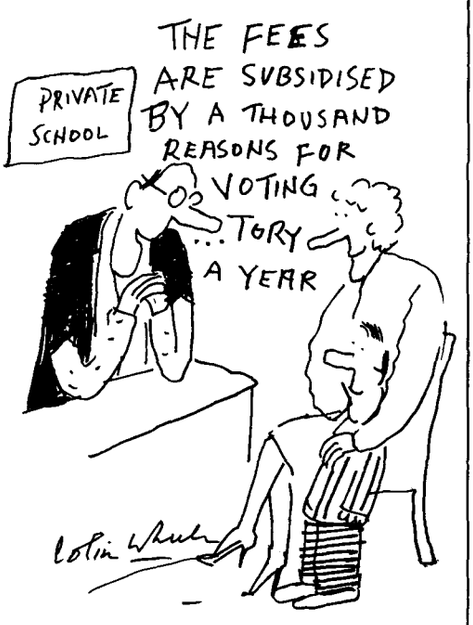
I do not go so far as to advocate Labour supporters to vote against their beliefs in these seats; I merely point out that these seats alone could be won or held by the Alliance given their present poll ratings. And Labour could benefit; if on 11 June 40 per cent vote Tory and 38 per cent Labour, say, the expected result would be: Tories 318, Labour 295, Alliance 15, Others 22. If however, the Alliance were to win or hold the above seats and the Nationalists capture Banff, Moray and Ynys Mon, the result would be: Tories 302, Labour 295, Alliance 28, Others 25. In the first case, the Tories and the Alliance could form a majority coalition but Labour and the Alliance could not; in other words Owen would be off the hook. In the second case, Labour is in with a chance.

Since I do not live in any of the 16 seats I have mentioned, I will not presume to offer advice for those that do. For the rest of us, we may, with greater or lesser relief, consign Tactical Voting to the Memory Hole.

101 reasons

John Rentoul, New Statesman
I tried not to clutter up my 100 reasons for not voting Tory (*NS* 15 May) with excessively detailed sources and references. But since reason No 42 has been challenged by the private schools' press office (Letters, 5 June), I shall bore you with the footnotes in full.

The taxpayer *does* subsidise private schools by about £600 million a year. The latest figures for the cost of sending the children of people in the armed services and the diplomatic service are £92.4 million and £3.2 million respectively in 1986/87 (*Hansard*, 18 February 1987, cols 686 and 700). I make that closer to my £100 million than their £75 million, even before updating it to the current financial year, which I did with all the figures. I got the estimated cost of the Assisted Places Scheme for 1987/88 from the Department of Education and Science press office; yes, it has gone up sharply — the government is very keen on it. The value of charitable status to private schools is more speculative: you can prefer my £60 million or their £30 million. The last proper attempt to quantify it was by Rick Rogers, the *New Statesman*'s excellent former education correspondent, in 1980. He made it £30 million then, seven years ago.



The private schools' other argument is that the parents of privately-educated children pay through taxes and rates for an education service they don't use, and that it would cost the state education system more if it had to take over responsibility for this 6.6 per cent of schoolchildren. That's a separate issue. I think it's a matter of principle that the whole community should bear the cost of providing a universal education service. If people want to opt out of that service, like the health service, then they can't be allowed to opt out of paying for it for everybody else, because that would leave non-taxpayers without schools or health care. Of course people are paying for private education and private health care 'twice'. That's their business; and not a business which I want to subsidise.

If I made an error, it was to suggest that there are *only* 100 reasons for not voting Tory.

More in anger . . .

Margaret Marshall, Woodbridge, Suffolk
I have taken your magazine for over 40 years and this is the first time I have written to you in anger. The voice of minorities in our society should be shared not only in their own publications, but also by the general public. How else can we be made aware of our own lack of understanding?

If, as you state (*NS* 22 May), Andrew Lumsden's journalism is unique in a national paper then hooray for the *New Statesman*. Please ensure that the life and views of the gay and lesbian movements continue to be featured so that I — a retired infant headteacher of 62 with three children of my own — can at this late stage in my life better understand and sympathise with the 5-10 per cent of the population who are gay.

News from Lewisham East

Tony Black, Sevenoaks, Kent
I very much hope that Russell Profitt wins Lewisham East this week, but Ed Pearce (*NS* 29 May) should have done a bit more homework.

Didn't anyone tell him, for instance, that only a few weeks ago the Alliance won their first ever seat on Lewisham Council at a by-election in 'safe' Downham ward, beating Labour into third place? And that Grove Park has returned one Labour and one Tory councillor since a by-election about two years ago? The fact is that the Labour vote has been seriously eroded by the Right to Buy in wards like Churchdown and Downham, which consist largely of desirable council estates, and that these days if there are any safe Labour wards in the constituency they are more likely to be Hither Green (where Russell Profitt lives) and Manor Lee. Of the 48 Labour councillors eight are black and the Conservatives number one among their 18.

As for Bala Gnanapragasam, his failure to get elected to the ILEA in Lewisham West last year is at least to some extent attributable to the intervention there of the son of Christopher Price, the former Labour MP for the constituency, as an independent Labour candidate.

Paul Backhouse, Alliance Agent, Lewisham East
Ed Pearce was well out of date in his survey of the constituency's political balance, greatly underestimating the prospects for the SDP/Liberal Alliance candidate, Wendy Stone. He referred, for instance, to the Downham (now partly privatised) estate as strongly Labour when in fact its voters in April this year elected an SDP councillor, with the Tory just behind and Labour well down in third place. Did not Profitt's 'friendly agent' tell Pearce about this, and about the effect locally of the SDP landslide in the Greenwich by-election, when Rosie Barnes, not at all dissimilar from Wendy Stone, put Labour well behind.

Pearce appeared to be exaggerating the chances of the agile Tory and playing down the chances of the Alliance. I can assure you that apart from the facts mentioned above, as well as the Alliance's possession of the neighbouring seats of Woolwich and Bermondsey, our canvassing tells a different story.

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Secret Society: a reply to Duncan Campbell

Julian Lewis, Director, Coalition for Peace Through Security

If I had £5 for every left-wing 'revelation' made about the successful anti-CND campaign in 1983, the Coalition for Peace Through Security (CPS) could relax its fundraising efforts for the indefinite future. The art is, of course, to recycle most of the same old material while adding a couple of 'new' ingredients to justify the repetition.

Though I have no objection to Duncan Campbell having spies inside organisations he dislikes, if he can get away with it, to wheel out Piers Wooley — his long-time mole in Conservative Central Office — as an authoritative 'former Tory party official' is a little bit too cheeky.

Wooley worked at Smith Square from July 1982 until the end of the first week of October 1983. He was one of only two possible sources for Duncan's article on the CPS (*NS* 28 January 1983) and as such was someone to whom I entrusted no detailed information about my plans for opposing CND from then onwards.

His departure from Central Office was particularly well-timed. Having pocketed his last salary payment on Friday, 7 October, he appeared on *Panorama* the following Monday alleging that, yes indeed, the Tories did have a secret agenda to dismantle the Health Service, etc., etc. The charge was calculated to cause maximum embarrassment to his erstwhile employer on the eve of its 1983 Annual Conference — which opened on Tuesday, 11 October, the day after the programme was broadcast.

This, then, is the gentleman who has now re-emerged to allege that the CPS (which by 1983 consisted only of three soon to be selected prospective parliamentary candidates) were 'the street-wise kids (who) were mainly involved with heckling at public meetings, organising anti-CND rallies (and) finding any opportunity *where they could have a direct attack at street level on CND.*' It is a slanderous caricature.

I and my two colleagues attended dozens of meetings putting long, detailed and difficult questions to CND spokespersons, and gladly taking the platform with those who were willing to debate with us. In my own case, they included Dr John Cox (twice), Canon Paul Oestreicher and Miss Meg Beresford, now CND General Secretary. Nor is any mention made of the numerous letters, articles, news stories and Gallup Poll surveys originating from us which major serious newspapers saw fit to print so often.

So far as I know, Piers Wooley was never present at a single meeting or debate with CND which the CPS attended. Nor did he witness the much smaller number of counter-demonstrations — usually mounted from roof-level, not street-level, when CND demonstrations passed our offices. His remarks are phrased to imply that I and my colleagues engaged in or condoned violent physical confrontations as a matter of policy. I shall be taking legal advice this week on the prospects of seeking an injunction against the BBC if it proposes to screen any such false suggestion.

As for the claim that: 'First (I) agreed to be interviewed. Then (I) changed my mind', it is totally untrue. This seems designed to make me seem evasive and to justify the fact that no effort is made in this part of the programme to present a balanced view. Maybe that is how Alasdair Milne was induced to approve the broadcast. What I told Duncan's researcher Patrick Forbes, when he initially broached the question, was what I told his director Brian Barr, when the latter telephoned me on 29 October 1986 — that I should be happy to debate any of these issues with Duncan on television under the auspices of impartial BBC professionals. I was not prepared to legitimise a situation in which one of my most vehement political opponents, Duncan Campbell, was elevated by the BBC into ringmaster, judge and jury, when his proper place in any consideration of these issues is similar to mine — as an expert, but committed protagonist in the debate.

I told Barr that I would take very great exception to any claim on the programme that I had been given the opportunity to put my side of the case but refused: *'I'm perfectly happy to come on,'* I told him, *'but I want to come on with professional, impartial BBC people.'* He replied: *'No, I have no intention of saying "Dr Lewis refused to appear on the programme", if you decided not to.'* Neither he nor Duncan responded further on the question of an impartial moderator, and the way my position on this question of appearing has now been falsified shows how wise I was to insist on an impartial moderator before agreeing to appear. My offer still stands.

So what is left of the *Secret Society*'s critique of the CPS? Only the claim that in 1982 two donations may have been made to it by an American Conservative foundation. Although I did not become CPS Director until the end of that year, and am thus unfamiliar with particular prior fund-raising successes, I can assure you that the sums involved are only a fraction of what is required to maintain a full-time London office over an extended period.

Only recently, E. P. Thompson confirmed that END has had 'generous support' as a result of US fundraising for several years, and the Bristol-based 'Freeze' has received the equivalent of thousands of pounds from the US Topsfield Foundation. The important point when raising funds is to retain complete independence and freedom of action over how they will be used by one's own organisation. That's what I have always done since I became CPS Director at the beginning of 1983.

Duncan Campbell comments: Julian Lewis was given no undertaking by producer Brian Barr or anyone else that the BBC would agree to conceal the fact that he first agreed, and then refused to take part in an interview with me for *Secret Society*. This is an invention intended to underpin his and his colleagues' subsequent offences against the BBC, which late last year proceeded through successive stages of personal attacks on myself and the series by the so called 'Freedom Association', the trumpeting of legal opinions purporting to claim that the BBC was in breach of its charter by making the programme at all, and then a letter-writing campaign to the Director General.

Obviously, it is inconvenient for Mr Lewis to have these facts stated. His rewriting of events is intended to fit with the line taken by the Freedom Association in its subsequent personal attacks, and allegations of partiality as to facts. So it is important to note that Lewis doesn't refute any of the facts in the *NS* about his own conduct; or the fact that it was part of an orchestrated campaign, his part in which was so distasteful to many staunch NATO campaigners that they withdrew from further association with Lewis or Mr Winston Churchill MP. Indeed Lewis is now forced to acknowledge that the money for the CPS came from foreign political sources, and not pensioners digging in their pockets for 50 pence pieces, as he suggested at the time.

So far as the use of MI5 information by the Conservative Party is concerned, Ray Witney MP has acknowledged that this was indeed the source of the material about CND members that he prepared for Michael Heseltine to send out.

Lewis makes no mention at all of the Coalition's smear leaflets against CND, the conviction of a CPS pilot for illegal low flying over a CND demonstration, or the way in which CPS members followed Bruce Kent around the US, ringing radio stations in advance of his tour to inform them that he was a Communist. These were lies told repeatedly.

Whopper!

Professor R. V. Hesketh, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

Mrs Thatcher's administration has informed Parliament, the press and public that no plutonium from the CEGB nuclear programme has ever been exported for use in weapons. By contrast, it is an established fact that the entire production of CEGB plutonium over a period of seven years has been exported for use in weapons. The CEGB admits the quantity; the US government and the UKAEA admit the purpose.

Thus it appears that the statement made to Parliament is a large material inaccuracy; within the definition given in the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* it is a whopper. Electorate should note.

Indian illiteracy

Paul Seabright, London E5

What a pity Geoffrey Goodman, in his Indian diary (*NS* 22 May), repeated the old myth that high levels of illiteracy in India's rural areas are due to their being 'immovably suspicious of any form of teaching which questions several thousand years of tradition'.

While instances of such suspicion can no doubt be found, it is striking what an enormous respect for education there is in even the areas of highest illiteracy. The explanation for this apparent paradox is economic: primary school teachers are paid little more than agricultural labourers, and it is hard to keep competent and motivated teachers in the village areas.

Furthermore, unemployment is so high even among the educated that after ten years of schooling someone may be unable to find any other work than labouring for the same wage as an illiterate. When the quality of elementary education is poor, and the rewards of undertaking it perceived as low, it is no wonder that families whose children suffer malnutrition would rather put them to work than send them to school.

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BACKCHAT

OUT TO LUNCH

City talk

Andrew Lumsden *in San Francisco*

A MAN CALLED SNOOZING who lives in Boring, Oregan, has just been fined for speeding, reports columnist Herb Caen in this morning's San Francisco *Chronicle*. Anybody want a This America column?

I promised not to overthrow the US Constitution when I got my unlimited entry visa back in 1978, so I'll be staying out of politics here by the Bay and, with the temperature in the nineties, who's got the energy anyway?

Nobody ever asked me to make the same promise about the British Constitution, no doubt because we haven't got one. So here's a promise of a different sort. If ever I return to the Land of the Unfree I've decided it will be with an expeditionary force. We'll land at Oban, raise the Highland clans, beat down through the workless North and burn Downing Street to the ground.

That's if you guerrillas (good on you) don't get her out. If you do I'll revise my Rules of Engagement and only Kinnock's private office gets burned to the ground. Then, from the Speaker's chair, I'll impose a Constitution of which two-term premierships (maximum), as in this civilised polity, will be Article One.

The Hearst press here in California, historically equivalent to all our bad press barons rolled into one, successfully backed a certain Nancy Pelosi's 2 June race for a vacant San Francisco seat in the US Congress. She's a rich, conservative-type, mother-of-five Democrat. And did her campaign trail take her out among this city's lesbian/gay people? Yes it did. She turned up for close questioning on all her policies by gay community leaders.

And did the Hearst or any other local press mock and jeer her for it? No they didn't. And what happened when John Molinari, hoping to be mayor here when Dianne Feinstein's two terms expire soon, promised — like every other candidate for mayor — that he and the wife would ride in the next Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade? Or when a *second* Massachusetts congressman came out as gay on 29 May? Why, the papers merely reported it. Remember reporting? I do, just.

Here's another tale of the city. The other day, the Hearst-owned *Examiner's* chief rival, the *Chronicle*, quarrelled with its brilliant out gay reporter Armistead Maupin. He picked up the phone to William Hearst the Third — which is like phoning Lord Rothermere from Maxwell's office — and said, 'Hey, can I cross the street?' 'Welcome aboard,' said Hearst, 'glad to have you.'

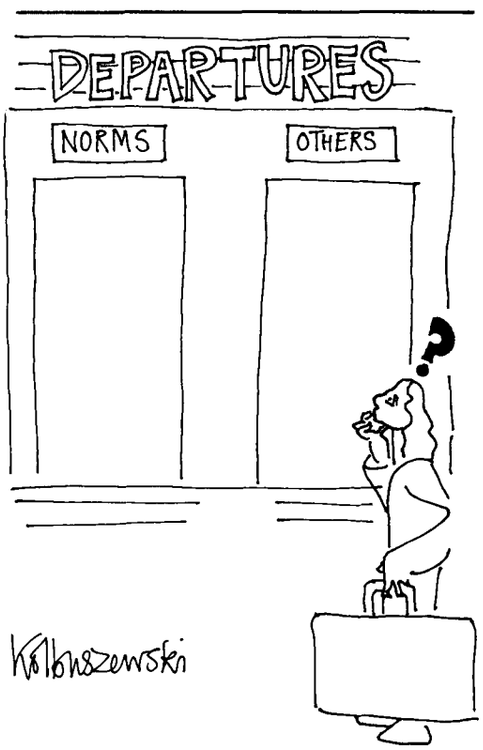
Imagine the *London Standard* or the *Mail* printing *me*. Article Two of the Constitution in the baggage of my maybe North Atlantic expeditionary force will read: 'A free press favours free speech.' Revolutionary, huh? Naturally, grown-up attitudes to gays are still missing from a few stray pockets here in the USA (e.g. in the Oval Office), you bet your ass they are. But even Rupert Murdoch breathing bacilli over the continent has failed so far to remove every quaint old idea about the proper dictionary definition of reporting: distribution of facts to readers.

Woodward and I in Alpine boots and futons, or whatever those things are called, climbed one of San Francisco's vertical hills on Sunday for tea with Maupin. There was a minute's silence for catching breath and for dead Britania, to whom the unhappy overseas once looked for liberty.

Every refugee to the States gets their name fixed, like their teeth, in the end. Gary Hart did. Quentin Crisp did it even before he arrived. My weird Scots surname tumbles out of welcoming American mouths as Lumpit, which feels singularly appropriate. If I go in for vaudeville I think I'll look for a partner named Likeit. Only, vaudeville like English liberty's dead. So — he ponders — what sort of career to adopt here?

Exemplars: there's Francis Drake, who sailed into this beautiful bay 400 years ago and invented the cable car. There's the Collins sisters, who from bit parts in 1813 in Jane Austen have become big in *Dynasty* and literature. There's Charley Dickens who from a wretched existence as parliamentary sketch writer in a Victorian boot-blacking factory rose to marry Mary Pickford and found United Artists.

I think I'll just become a cissie (yes, yes, *plus ça change*). That's the vogue word down these generous streets in private talk, 'gay' tending to be for politer public use. Try mentally substituting 'cissie' for the three-letter word next time you see it bannered across one of London's news (we should be so lucky) papers. It may ruin Murdoch's day. Have a nice one! □



FIRST PERSON

Of Whigling Provosts

Tom Leonard

I DON'T BELIEVE a word of them. I don't believe Kinnock would remove nuclear missiles or bases. The so-called Hard Left is keeping its mouth shut because the non-nuclear card is the only Left card that Kinnock has. And it's not even Left, it's Liberal. But the anti-nuclear Liberals are keeping their mouths shut because of Owen and the Alliance.

You go for a day out to Dunoon and there's one of the submarines heading out to sea just when you're having a bit of relaxation, letting your mind go blank. You go for a holiday in Crete and when you're learning the constellations at night with your son you begin to notice all the satellites nightly crossing the sky. The only English station you can pick up is the American base, Radio Heraklion. They're everywhere.

What is a conventional weapon, that's what I'd like to know. Is it one of those phosphorous ones that burn inside the skin? Is an Exocet conventional? When laser weapons are developed, will these be called conventional or not? If they're conventional, does that mean a Labour government could stock up with billions of pounds' worth?

John Henderson, my jo, John,
I think the step was wrang
That led ye 'mang the Chartist crood
Or sic a graceless gang;
For they, the fules, were serious,
An' onward meant to go,
An' ye ken it wisna sae wi' you,
John Henderson, my jo.

John Henderson, my jo, John,
Ye turned in time tae see
That neither cash nor Provostships
The Chartists had tae gie;
You're now a Whigling Provost, John,
But mair a Whig you'll grow,
An' you'll maybe be our member yet,
John Henderson, my jo.

John Henderson, my jo, John,
I'm proud indeed tae tell,
That aye whate'er the public did,
Ye minded weel yoursel';
Your nest you've snugly feathered, John,
In spite o' frien' or foe,
An' that was a' ye bargain'd for
John Henderson, my jo.

(Edward Polin — 1841)

A sceptical American friend has written you a derogatory letter about the Lord Chancellor: it describes him as 'slumped on his woolly sack like five stone of Golden Wonders.' Write an informal letter to your friend correcting his misunderstandings. Describe the triple doff-hatting significance of the inauguration of bishops.

A recently-appointed Knight of the Garter has besought your permission 'To wear it round my middle leg'. Draft a proclamation allowing him to do

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so at specific state ceremonial occasions. Itemise those at which this would be held as not in keeping with the dignity of office.

Estimate how many bicycles would be required to transport those members of parliament who are council-house tenants. Write an essay showing why this examplifies the health of our democracy.

If a Party Leader smiles forty-three times in one hour, calculate how many pence per smile over forty hours would earn him a Youth Training Scheme wage.

What's a conventional weapon, that's what I'd like to know. Is parliament a closed value-system that renders honest dialogue impossible? Does every dominant aspect of British culture have to present such when analysed? Do you think, ach well, I'll vote if the local candidate's really Left, if not forget it?

the freedom of choice,

capitalism,

welfare capitalism,
capitalism with a bit more welfare than the last one,

nationalistic capitalism,
capitalism that really cares about industrial pollution,
vegetarian capitalism,

eccentric capitalism — capitalism in funny hats and rosettes.

* * *

what country where you born in —
does your government need to borrow capital?
how do the repayments affect you? How much interest per year?

do you get hungry? do you have a decent place to stay?

* * *

You go for a day out to Dunoon and there's one of the submarines heading out to sea just when you're having a bit of relaxation, letting your mind go blank. You go for a holiday in Crete and when you're learning the constellations at night with your son you begin to notice all the satellites nightly crossing the sky. The only English station you can pick up is the American base, Radio Heraklion. They're everywhere. □

Tom Leonard is writer-in-residence to Renfrew District Libraries. His sequence of political poems Situations Theoretical and Contemporary *is published by Galloping Dog Press Newcastle at £2. They also publish a collection of his work,* Intimate Voices, *at £4.95.*

FOOD

Thatcher's children

Colin Spencer

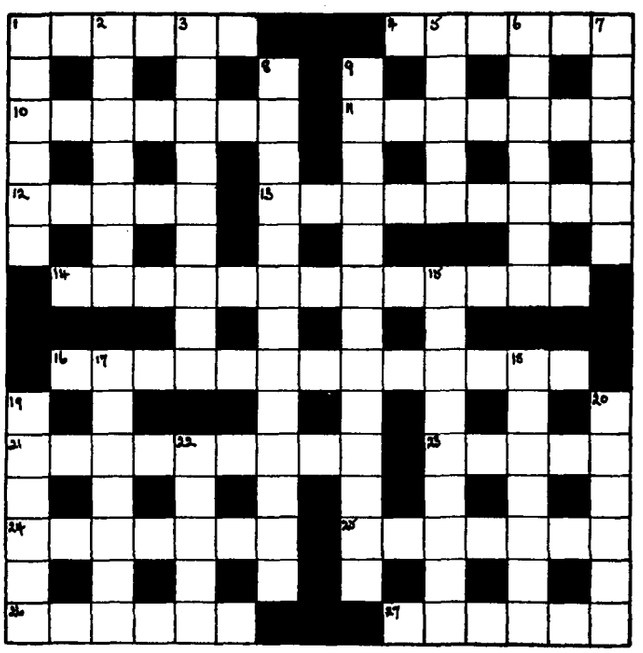
GOVERNMENT REPORTS have a history of being stillborn, but nowhere have they been so consistently killed before birth as in the areas of agricultural practice, the food industry and the nation's diet. *The Politics of Food* (Century, £14.95), Geoffrey Cannon's new and arresting book, gives in the first quarter a horrific picture of the diet of our children and adolescents and of how each government report on it has been delayed, censored or muffled.

While the independent reports from universities tend often not to attract the news, the one from Bristol University in 1984 should have been a source of profound concern to government for its pathetic picture of the diet of a two year old from West Glamorgan. The child's day started with cornflakes and a cup of tea, then a snack of a Cadbury's creme egg and a milky bar in mid-morning; lunch was a baked potato and a slice of white bread and butter; in the afternoon there was ice cream, two slices of angel cake and two digestive biscuits; in the evening the child finished the day with two slices of white bread and butter and a cup of coffee.

Almost unbelievably, the diet above was better than the norm, for it included a baked potato and the digestive biscuits, which had been recommended as sources of fibre. The researcher from the Child Development Programme monitored 1,000 families and concluded that there are many malnourished children who suffer continual illnesses — diarrhoea, chest infections — which have to be treated by strong drugs and hospitalisation. Also, in the first two years, the brain is still developing — and malnourishment

Weekend Crossword 1560

PRIZES: £3 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1560, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8BA, by first post 22 June.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

ACROSS

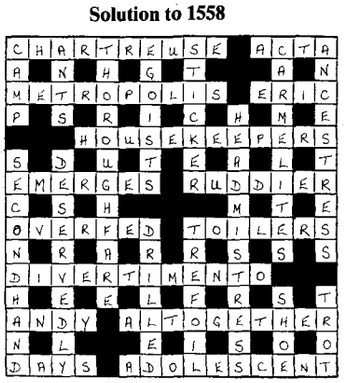
1. Ruler who holds a part of the body in honour (6)
4. Covered a little prince after a little drink (6)
10. More recent article of the Pope's church (7)
11. As a representative, there is no point holding the first person's (7)
12. There is nothing obscure about universal hatred (5)
13. Grows bigger in fresh air scenes (9)
14. He understands what others are thinking in spite of being pedestrian (13)
16. Stars which would make sailors angry if there were no money (8,5)
21. When the mist swirls in the wreckage of the crash (9)
23. Material essential to any lonely woman (5)
24. European seen in holding a colleague of Stalin (7)
25. Sick one quoted as not legal (7)
26. Sweet needed to make the best of feeling ill (6)
27. Fruit for a liar without one (6)

DOWN

1. Inexperienced actor (6)
2. The language is allowed this in a different construction (7)
3. The standard quantity is superior (9)
5. Chinese plant a foreign friend among soldiers (5)
6. Priest who showed that the negative was in force (7)
7. Fashionable points in a nest (6)
8. Knowledge gives a bit of space to a reduced team in an old BBC programme (13)
9. Reagan is after an honour in a trick which is out of date (13)
15. Secretion which takes one near land (9)
17. Unusual rules of royal pronoun (7)
18. Element which a bachelor needs to make ointment (7)
19. Piece of writing a little too big for the satchel (6)
20. States about one in ten possibly gets together (6)
22. Egghead tears up the point of Christianity (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1558



Prizewinners to 1558

A. L. Morgan
(South Willingham, Lincoln)

Anne Faulkner (Stockport, Cheshire)

Mr M. P. Berry (Beckenham, Kent)

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leads to retarded brain growth.

The diet of ten-year-old children is no better. In a study of 15,000 children by Professor Neville Butler, he found that two-thirds of the children never ate fish or brown bread while seven out of ten ate chocolate nearly every day. It's hardly surprising that the rate of childhood insulin-dependent diabetes has increased six-fold over the last 25 years. In that time, too, the rate of eczema in children under seven has more than doubled, obesity has doubled, asthma has trebled. (Eczema is thought to be an allergic reaction to food additives and agrichemicals in the food supply; the diabetes stems from a high consumption of sugar and sweets while asthma could be due to pollution.)

The link between diet and disease can surely not be ignored by government any longer. But it tries strenuously enough. A report on food eaten by schoolchildren was completed in 1983 and referred to by Mrs Thatcher as going to be published late in 1984. Two years passed without sign or suggestion of the report and then it was leaked. Molly Disselduff, the chief compiler of the report, last year retired from the DHSS and is silenced by the Official Secrets Act.

The leaked report, cut from the published report, made a strange admission:

> Because of the large quantity of chips, cakes and biscuits consumed by these schoolchildren, the consumption of most other food items was correspondingly reduced. The evaluation of the dependence on just three types of food for a significant proportion of the total daily intakes of nutrients is beyond the scope of this report and will require further analysis and interpretation.

Caroline Walker, a nutritionist, worked out from the report that the monthly diet for these children was four and a half pounds of chips, eight and a quarter pounds of biscuits and cakes, 13 pints of full fat milk and nine pints of soft drinks. The amount of fresh vegetables and fruit was so minimal that it needed a microscope to find them.

Another report, from MAFF this time, on the dietary habits of 15-to-25-year-olds, was lost for three years after the survey, then published discreetly in *Human Nutrition* (which is only available by subscription and costs a tenner). It discovered that chips and chocolate contribute more calories a day than bread. Three ounces of fresh vegetables and two ounces of fresh fruit are eaten per day. And so it goes on.

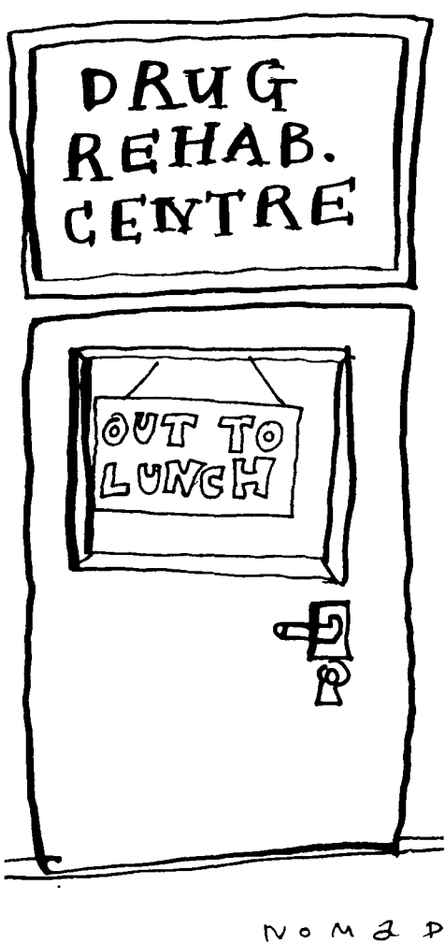
Is our nutritional poverty reflected in the rest of Europe? No. Three times the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables are eaten in Italy, Spain and Portugal, while twice as much is eaten in Austria, France, Switzerland and West Germany. We are, as Geoffrey Cannon illustrates with such detail, the sick man, woman and child of Europe.

He also scotches another myth, that our diet is an advance on that of the working rural man in the 19th century. A study of Welsh agricultural families in 1863 showed their staples of rough bread, potatoes, small amounts of fish, meat, butter, cheese and sugar was possibly short on vitamin C, but that a drink they made from the berries of the mountain ash was rich in it. The 1863 diet had less animal protein but more overall protein and more iron and vitamin D than the average diet today. It was, of course, very high in dietary fibre and low in saturated fats and sugars.

While our diet may appear to be a lot richer and more varied, that is mainly a delusion of packaging; the same fats, sugars and additives appear in countless items of highly processed foods. Our diet has declined really over the last 50 years.

Geoffrey Cannon points out that John Boyd Orr considered the *Thirties* diet to be deficient for health. Then, however, his demands for a public health policy were listened to by governments who acknowledged that food and health needed radical reform. He was less lucky with his prophecies. In 1937, Boyd Orr commented that, in a few years hence, when the connection between diet and health was clearly recognised, we would regard the necessity of ensuring that everyone has a healthy diet with the same practical sense that we regard the preservation of domestic water from pollution.

Any change must overcome the vested interests of the agricultural and food industries and their profound influence on government policy. The most unnerving fact is that, recently, the vested interests have become much more of a monopoly. Five firms own a majority of the food retailing market, the two giants being ICI and Unilever. Cannon's book is a significant contribution to the struggle to obtain good food for all, but mostly for our children, who suffer malnutrition while living off the processed fats of Thatcher's world. □



Weekend competition

No 2979 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

In the USA they now have an organisation called Fundamentalists Anonymous to counsel those who have left one of the Fundamentalist religious groups. Could we have extracts from counselling sessions held by Tories Anonymous, Labour Anonymous, Liberals Anonymous, SDP Anonymous . . . Max. 150 words by 24 June.

No 2976 **Set by Gray Dorn**

One *really good* reason for voting Tory on Thursday 11 June.

Report **By Rosie Hughes**

You poor, poor, darling lambkins. How you obviously racked your brains and burnt the midnight oil over this one. Pages sable with crossings out, mountainous with Tipp-Ex, empty with hopelessness scatter the desk in front of me (the few exceptions are from those of you convinced that sufficient, and sufficiently awful, Tory rule will lead to the Revolution — oh dear). For those to whom real, tortured thought resulted in the following flashes of brilliance, £2 (I'm sorry, but some are *very* short) per head.

My *really good* reason for voting Tory on 11 June is that my wife placed a bet at quite advantageous odds some time ago on a Tory victory.

BRIAN COATES

Vote Conservative to guarantee full employment for Duncan Campbell.

GEORGE MOOR

To ensure the survival of 'Denis's Diary'.

TIM HOPKINS

To avoid giving Edward Heath any satisfaction.

NOEL PETTY

Because we need a leader who can deal with Pol Pot, Strossner, Botha, Pinochet and such like on equal terms.

T. A. DYER

To give Mrs Thatcher a false sense of security!

SID FIELD

I want to astonish my grandchildren. I can't bear them thinking of me as an old fart, a wrinkle, a fud who always played it safe. When they ask me what I did in my younger days, I don't want to admit that I was sensible or prudent, doing what was good for me, like eating bran or pulses. I want them to know that I could be wild and abandoned too, reckless to the point of self-destruction, lived dangerously, took no thought for the morrow or my future well-being, said to hell with mega-boring ideas like the welfare of the country or the survival of civilization and cultural values. When they ask me what I did in the Great Election of 1987, I want to be able to say: 'I was crazy. Maybe I didn't play Russian Roulette. But I *did* vote for Margaret Thatcher.'

WATSON WEEKS

Last time we had a Labour government we also had platform shoes.

DAVID GAFFNEY

Incorporating 'The Nation', 'The Athenaeum' and 'The Week-end Review'. Registered as a newspaper. Typesetting by Tocatta Graphics, Tabard House, London SE1
Printed by BPCC Colchester Web Offset Ltd, Sheepen Place, Colchester CO3 3LJ (Tel. 577881), a member company of BPCC Printing Corporation plc.
Published by The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co. Ltd at Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8BA.

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Take me to your Leader
by Moanin' Minnie
IT IS ELECTION EVE. A SINISTER SECT — COMPRISING ALMOST ENTIRELY OF CLONED DOCTORS — MEETS TO ENACT A RITUAL OF PROFOUND FAITH····
FELLOW DAVIDS— THE TIME HAS COME! FOLLOW ME NOW TO OUR HISTORIC DESTINY
ME TOO DAVID?
YES, EVEN YOU DAVID
Broken Mould Mountain
WE AWAIT··· THE UPSWING
©JOHN MINNION·86

Chess

A PIECE of homely advice recommends that you should expect the worst, because that way you don't risk disappointment and might get a pleasant surprise. The worst is so bad this time that normal preparations, selecting a wall with the right surface to meet the head or the routine alcoholic amnesia option, are pitifully inadequate. A plan to emigrate — to a country with a rational electoral system where national safety and national pride are not equated with readiness to resort to genocide — would have the measure of things. But I suppose most of us will settle in a sort of gallows' humour (*vide supra*), accustomed to a chuckle as a response to our deepest convictions.

A trip into the history of chess may be recommended for its emotionally soothing effect. Any scene can be represented as bathed in Alliance colours, whether true to the original or not. There is also a great lesson in all those hours of concentration spent on games you wouldn't want to play over again; *most human effort is wasted*. So, candidates and canvassers, you're not alone.

Some of the sayings of that champion aphorist of chess, Savielly Tartakower, might have been intended for the enlightenment of electioneers. No doubt they all realize that: 'The mistakes are all there just waiting to be made'. But can one offer Tartakower's 'The player who wins is the one who makes the mistake before the last' as a word of encouragement for Neil Kinnock? I've always thought that observation ignores the widespread capacity for making two consecutive mistakes. Anyway, I challenge you to find what penultimate error precedes the decorative sacrificial conclusion of this game:

Maroczy-Tartakower, Teplitz-Schönau 1922. Dutch Defence.
1. d4 e6 2. c4 f5 Here's a suspect for you! But there must surely be more than one mistake yet to come. **3. Nc3 Nf6 4. a3 Be7 5. e3 0-0 6. Bd3 d5 7. Nf3 c6 0-0 Ne4 9. Qc2 Bd6 10. b3 Nd7 11. Bb2 Rf6** There are several good plans against the Dutch Stonewall — open the e-file with e4, attack c6 with b4-b5, exchange dark-squared Bishops and occupy e5. But if White develops aimlessly, as Maroczy does here, Black's formation naturally leads to a K-side attack. **12. Rfe1 Rh6 13. g3 Qf6 14. Bf1 g5 15. Rad1** Another irrelevant move. 15. Bg2 should have been played. **g4 16. Nxe4 fxe4 17. Nd2 Rxh2!** In itself the Rook-sacrifice is easy to see. But would you be confident that there was time for the QB and QR to enter the attack? **18. Kxh2 Qxf2 + 19. Kh1 Nf6 20. Re2 Qxg3 21. Nb1** If only this Knight could get to f1! But defending pieces are huddled together in each other's way. **Nh5 22. Qd2 Bd7 23. Rf2 Qh4 + 24. Kg1 Bg3 25. Bc3 Bxf2 + 26. Qxf2 g3 27. Qg2 Rf8 28. Be1 Rxf1 + !** One good Rook-sacrifice deserves another. **29. Kxf1 e5** Enter the notorious Bad Bishop. **30. Kg1 Bg4 31. Bxg3 Nxg3 32. Re1 Nf5 33. Qf2 Qg5 34. dxe5 Bf3 + 35. Kf1 Ng3 + 0-1.**

The historical peg on which I'm trying to hang all this is the fact that this year is the centenary of Tartakower's birth. I know that he was born, in Rostov-on-Don, in February 1887, but I can't vouch for the exact date, as some sources give the 9th and others the 21st. By contrast there is complete unanimity that 22 June will be the 150th anniversary of Paul Morphy's birth. The received thing to say about Morphy is that he was the first positional player. That's one version of Morphy: it can be corroborated by playing over his match games with Anderssen, Harrwitz and Löwenthal (e.g., in Batsford's reprint of the 1860 book by Löwenthal, *Morphy's Games of Chess*). I can't help thinking of Morphy as the legend that Fischer wanted to relive. But his popularity is really due to the flashy opera-box stuff. In this setting you needed the luck of a gambler, as in the following odds game (given without date in the Löwenthal collection):

Morphy-Amateur. Remove White's QN.
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 Nxd4 4. Nxe5 Ne6 5. Bc4 Nf6 6. Nxf7!? Kxf7 7. Bxe6 + Kxe6? Mr Amateur is a much improved player these days and would of course spot the refutation: 7 . . . dxe6 8. Qxd8 Bb4 + . **8. e5 Bc5 9. 0-0 Nd5 10. Qg4 + Kxe5 11. Bg5 Qf8 12. Rad1 Kd6 13. Qe4 Qf7 14. c4 Kc6 15. Rxd5 Kb6 16. Rxc5 c6** and at this point the game was terminated in the flamboyant style of the day by Morphy announcing mate in 4. Relief can't get much lighter than that.

Solution to last week's position **[Oliver-Peel, Aberystwyth 1987**: 1r5k/p2bb1pp/8/3Q2q1/4p1P1/2P2P2/P1P1B1P1/K2R3R]; **1 . . . Ba3?**, as played, failed to 2. Qxg5 Bb2 + 3. Kb1 Ba3 + 4. Bb5! 1-0. No better **1 . . . Qe3** 2. Qd2 Ba3 3. Rb1! with more back-rank trouble/2 . . . Qxd2 3. Rxd2 Bf6 4. Rd4 and wins on material. Most interesting and best was **1 . . . Bf6! 2. Rxh7 + ! Kxh7 3. Rh1 + Kg6 4. Qxe4 + Bf5!** 4 . . . Kf7 5. Bc4 + mates. **5. gxf5 + Qxf5 6. Qc4!** Black's active pieces should draw after 6. Qd3 Qxd3 7. Bxd3 + Kg5 8. a4 Bxc3 + 9. Ka2 Rb2 + 10. Ka3 Kf4, but 6. Qe3! is also strong. **Qf4!** 6 . . . Rc8 7. g4!. **7. Bd3 + Kg5 8. Qd5 + Be5** 8 . . . Qe5 9. f4 + **9. g3 Qxg3 10. f4 + Qxf4 11. Rf1 Kh6 12. Qe6 +** and wins. Difficult play!

George Botterill

New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8BA
Tel: 01-739 3211 (Editorial & Administration)
Telex: 28449/Cables: Newstat, London E2
© 1987 Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd & contributors
Published by The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd
Distributed by NS Distribution

Editor: John Lloyd; **Books and Arts Editor:** Harriett Gilbert; **Writers:** Sarah Benton, Duncan Campbell, Jane Dibblin, Rob Edwards (Scotland), Patrick Forbes, Peter Kellner (Political Editor), John Rentoul; **Deputy Books & Arts Editor:** Malcolm Imrie; **Poetry Editor:** Hugo Williams; **Production Manager:** Joanne Hurst; **Art Editor:** Vicky Hutchings; **Editorial Assistant:** Jane Thomas

Subscriptions: Cecilia Milton, Joan Scanlon (01-739 1737); **Display advertisements: Advertising Director:** Alan Le Coyte; **Advertising Managers:** Laura Berryman, David Jones (01-739 1645); **Classified advertisements:** Janet Banks (01-739 1645)

Subscription rates: UK & Eire £40; Europe (air mail only £46); rest of world: air speeded £51; air mail £61. USA: air speeded $70; air mail $85. Canada: air speeded Can $90; air mail Can $115.

Second class postage paid at New York, NY USPS 382260. Air freight in US by Speedimpex USA Inc. (US Postmaster: Address changes should be sent to New Statesman, Speedimpex USA Inc., 45-45 39th Street, Long Island City, NY 11104)

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This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please.)

☐ Presumably to help those with limited intelligence, British Rail has a notice at Blackfriars station in London which says: 'The Underground is down the stairs.' — *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

☐ Sheila Wood, a vegetarian mother of two children, is standing as Hexham's Independent Green candidate in support of ecology. Speaking from her Cockshaw, Hexham home she said: 'I'm too busy eating celery to bother talking about myself or the views I am standing for.' — *Evening Chronicle* (Gill Owen)

☐ He was surprised to spot a hearse near the village festooned with flowers and carrying a coffin, which sported, in a side window, a sticker exhorting 'Vote Conservative'. — *Daily Telegraph* (G. Heathcote)

☐ The election of the member in Sir Julian's constituency will be accomplished by an undefined but deeply-understood process involving conviction and habit, lace curtains and Knowing Your Place, leaders, the led and Getting Out the Best China, Armistice Day and Them As Knows Best, and, especially by a chemistry of relationships, involving help needed, favours granted, obligation accepted, duty recognised and loyalty honoured. — *The Times* (Leonard Cox)

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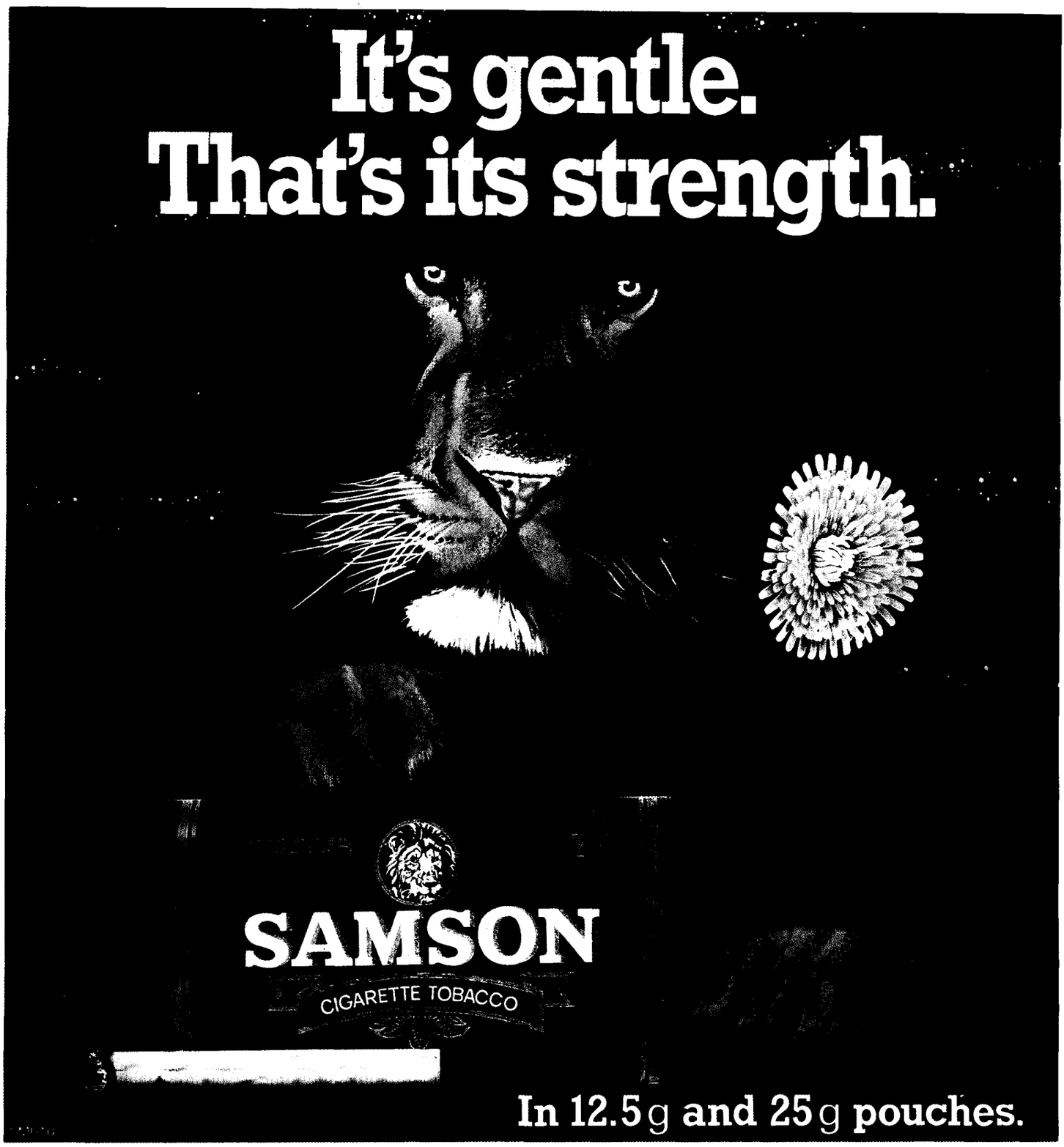

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Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers

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